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INDEX TO VOLUME XV OF ACCENT

Hazard Adams: *Yeats the Stylist and Yeats the Irishman* (review of *The Identity of Yeats* by Richard Ellmann and *The Letters of W. B. Yeats,* edited by Allan Wade) ---- 234
Flora J. Arnstein: *Gulls* (poem) ---- 48
J. S. Atherton: *Finnegans Wake: "The Gist of the Pantomime"* (article) ---- 14
J. T. Beaty: *Riddles* (story) ---- 268
Frederick Bock: *Cartoon: The Valet* (poem) ---- 122
The Jays (poem) ---- 124
Sic Transit (poem) ---- 123
Millen Brand: *The End* (poem) ---- 61
Thomas B. Brumbaugh: *Figure Piece after Chamisso* (poem) ---- 214
Kenneth Burke: *The Criticism of Criticism* (review of *The Lion and the Honeycomb* by R. P. Blackmur) ---- 279
E. G. Burrows: *Expedition* (poem) ---- 213
Poem ---- 212
Grace Carnot: *The Panther* (poem) ---- 28
Arthur Carson: *Ananke* (poem) ---- 275
Winter, the Waiter (poem) ---- 275
Thomas H. Carter: *Rhetoric and Southern Landscapes* (review of *The Bride of the Innisfallen* by Eudora Welty and *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor) ---- 293
Wyndham Lewis: The Metaphysics of Reality (review of *Wyndham Lewis* by Hugh Kenner and *Self Condemned* by Wyndham Lewis) ---- 69
E. E. Cummings: *Poem* ---- 27
Babette Deutsch: *"Everything Has Its Own Speed"* (review of *Poems, 1923-1954* by E. E. Cummings and *Collected Poems* by James Stephens) ---- 73
Twentieth Century Sense and Sensibility (review of *Collected Poems* by Edith Sitwell and *The Shield of Achilles* by W. H. Auden) ---- 149
Sanford Edelstein: *Poem* ---- 102
Stand Where You Are (poem) ---- 261
Two Fairy Tales (poem) ---- 101
Dudley Fitts: *No Valediction* (review of *Songs for Eve* by Archibald MacLeish) ---- 77
Wallace Fowlie: *Pétrus Borel* (review of *Pétrus Borel, the Lycanthrope* by Enid Starkie) ---- 145
Three Poets (review of *Birthdays from the Ocean* by Isabella Gardner, *The Moral Circus* by Edwin Honig, and *Wilderness Stair* by Ben Belitt) ---- 237
Herbert Goldstone: *Of Comedy and Tragedy* (review of *The Simple Truth* by Elizabeth Hardwick, *Mardios Beach* by Oakley Hall, and *Out Went the Candle* by Harvey Swados) ---- 153
Yvan Goll: *John Death* (poem, translated by William Jay Smith) ---- 258
Landless John Circles the Earth Seven Times (poem, translated by William Carlos Williams) ---- 255
Landless John Leads the Caravan (poem, translated by William Carlos Williams) ---- 256

James B. Hall: *How to Make the Poem* (poem) ---- 106
Frank Holwerda: *Consider Poor Ansel, the Spinhead* (story) ---- 3
Viola Hopkins: *William Faulkner's "The Hamlet": A Study in Meaning and Form* (article) ---- 125
Robert Hutchinson: *In the Ward of Mercy* (poem) ---- 121
Young (poem) ---- 121
Stanley Edgar Hyman: *Ballads for Americans* (review of *The Ballad Book*, edited by MacEdward Leach) ---- 297
Dell Hymes: *I Do What I Can* (poem) ---- 68
Only a Little Down (or, The Rite Price) (poem) ---- 67
Jascha Kessler: *Fat Aaron and the Night Rider* (story) ---- 92
Katabolism, or, The Natural History of Love (poem) ---- 29
Virginia Kidd: *Before Her Life Her Eyes* (poem) ---- 32
In the Public Interest (poem) ---- 31
M. M. Liberman: *Fineboned Shoulder and Boyish Arm* (story) ---- 215
Frederick P. W. McDowell: *Robert Penn Warren's Criticism* (article) ---- 173
Daniel Marder: *The Szechwan Variation* (story) ---- 163
Mason Jordon Mason: *Consummatum Est* (poem) ---- 46
The Mother of Hamos (poem) ---- 47
Whizzbone the Warbleloot (poem) ---- 46
Jack Matthews: *The Antique Dealers* (story) ---- 111
Sherman Paul: *"Man's Perennial Depth Interests"* (review of *The Burning Fountain* by Philip Wheelwright) ---- 147
Rudolph Pellinat: *The River* (poem) ---- 276
J. F. Powers: *Blue Island* (story) ---- 243
Dorothy Roberts: *Cold* (poem) ---- 212
Dazzle (poem) ---- 211
Ralph Robin: *Built So* (poem) ---- 107
I Speak for Scissors Grinders (poem) ---- 107
Eli Siegel: *Also* (poem) ---- 233
Bernice Slote: *Garden, with Jane* (poem) ---- 277
Percé (poem) ---- 277
Mark Spilka: *Was D. H. Lawrence a Symbolist?* (article) ---- 49
Radcliffe Squires: *Extinct Lions* (poem) ---- 260
Self Land (poem) ---- 260
William Bysshe Stein: *The Moral Axis of "Benito Cereno"* (article) ---- 221
Richard G. Stern: *Good Morrow, Swine* (story) ---- 108
Eleanor Ross Taylor: *Araminta Dunlap, 1870* (poem) ---- 104
Goodbye Family (poem) ---- 103
Wind (poem) ---- 105
Byron Vazakas: *Whitman under the Aegis of Boston* (poem) ---- 276
Neil Weiss: *The Circus* (poem) ---- 198
Swan Lake (poem) ---- 197
T. Weiss: *This Narrow Stage* (poem) ---- 30
Frederic Will: *Three Poems* ---- 199
Gordon Woodward: *A Sound of Fury* (story) ---- 201
Rex Worthington: *Love* (story) ---- 33
Vernon Young: *Fugue of Faces: A Danish Film and Some Photographs* (article) ---- 262
"Hardly a Man Is Now Alive": Monologue on a Nazi Film (article) ---- 83

CONTENTS

Frank Holwerda: *Consider Poor Ansel, the Spinhead* 3

J. S. Atherton: *Finnegans Wake: "The Gist of the Pantomime"* 14

E. E. Cummings: *Poem* 27

Grace Carnot: *The Panther* 28

Jascha Kessler: *Katabolism, or, The Natural History of Love* 29

T. Weiss: *This Narrow Stage* 30

Virginia Kidd: *In the Public Interest* 31

Before Her Life Her Eyes 32

Rex Worthington: *Love* 33

Mason Jordan Mason: *Consummatum est* 46

Whizzbone the Warbleloot 46

The Mother of Hamos 47

Flora J. Arnstein: *Gulls* 48

Mark Spilka: *Was D. H. Lawrence a Symbolist?* 49

Millen Brand: *The End* 61

Dell Hymes: *Only a Little Down (or, The Rite Price)* 67

I Do What I Can 68

Thomas H. Carter: *Wyndham Lewis: The Metaphysics of Reality* (review of *Wyndham Lewis* by Hugh Kenner and *Self Condemned* by Wyndham Lewis) 69

Babette Deutsch: *"Everything Has Its Own Speed"* (review of *Poems, 1923-1954* by E. E. Cummings and *Collected Poems* by James Stephens) 73

Dudley Fitts: *No Valediction* (review of *Songs for Eve* by Archibald MacLeish) 77

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ACCENT: Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois. Published quarterly under the auspices of the Department of English of the University of Illinois. Subscriptions: $1.50 for one year, $2.50 for two years in the United States (elsewhere $1.75 for one year, $2.75 for two years). Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Entered as second-class matter Sept. 26, 1940, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1955, by ACCENT.

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ACCENT
A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE
Volume XV, Number 1 Winter, 1955

FRANK HOLWERDA:

Consider Poor Ansel, the Spinhead

The first time I saw these hawks, I thought they were eagles. They were that large. The tree in which they had their nest was a tall alder which really had no business being there in such high latitude in the first place. It was growing alongside the ditch that supplied water for the mine hydraulic guns and it couldn't have penetrated the permafrost, grown there and thrived, if it hadn't been for the ditch. Ditch seepage thawed the ground and the tree flourished.

So perhaps I should just blame the ditch and have an end to it. Just go back there some day if I have time and stomp that ditch full of brown-moss and spruce balls and dam it to utter and everlasting nugacity. Plug it up and let the beavers play and the otters slide and the minks snuffle around and the lynx dig out the beavers and the wolverines befoul it all and move on, and then have the cycle start over again. I have the opportunity to dam that ditch right now—I'm only across the ridge—but how about the time? Time, eh? Mere possession of a watch does not of itself provide time.

Standing there under that tall alder, I watched the parent birds fly up from the nest and then sail down toward the floor of the valley. Then one of the young ones took off after them, flapping awkwardly but going at high, seemingly-uncontrolled speed. Like a rough-feathered plummet he went. One remained in the nest, fully fledged and quivering. I should have walked on.

I jarred the trunk of the tree with the brush-hook I was carrying back to camp and when the vibrations of the blow travelled through the nest and out through the twig-tips, this young hawk still up there peeped timidly a few times, looked down and screamed in fright and then settled back in the nest, cowering.

What sensible reason did I have for cutting down that tree? I did it though. At that time there still was no spinning in spinning no spinning. I went at it with my brush-hook and after the noise of the first few blows stopped ringing and clattering in my ears, I didn't mind it so much. I certainly didn't mind the physical exertion. It made me feel good. Even while chopping away though, I wondered why I would swink so—just to catch a hawk. I'd have done the same thing to capture an owl, but to get a grouse or a ptarmigan, I wouldn't have done that much work—not even hungry I wouldn't have. There's something about catching a prey-bird that catching a seed- or bug-eater can't match.

When the tree finally came to earth, it fell softly and without the thunder I'd expected. It just bent double where I'd hacked it and came down with more of a swoosh and a muffled slam in the knee-deep moss than a crash. When the tree started to talk just before it toppled, the young hawk left his nest, gripped a branch and rode it down that way, wings half-extended as though drying them, peeping in fear all the way down.

I had quite a time catching him then. He hopped from branch to branch out of my reach and I only nailed him at last by taking off my jacket and leaping at him and smothering him down. He was an exceedingly-strong and well-developed bird and his talons were like things machined, fashioned of high-carbon steel. His beak was hooked and sharp as a fighting gaff and could have torn off a man's cheek and exposed his back teeth. There was yellow fire sparking from his eyes and his claws dug into the leather cuff of my gloves. But he made no attempt to fly away. The feathered bastard seemed to give it no thought at all.

On the trail alongside the ditch I carried him perched on my wrist; past the penstock where the ditch took to an inverted siphon and down into the valley, skidding and slipping on the rounded surface of the pipe, across the uneven tailing piles on the way to the gold camp.

A small, noisy avalanche clattered down behind me as I left the tailing pile and wound up in the middle of the gravel road leading

into camp, the hawk still clutching my wrist. It was just about there that I met the mine superintendent and we passed each other without a word as we always did. I walked another twenty feet or so and then turned around and he did the same. We always did that when we met and passed each other; we'd both turn and look back at each other but we never said a word. He was a strange, quiet man for a mine superintendent and never touched a drop. He was friendly all right but not given to loud greetings; he was reserved in the quantity of conversation he dispensed. He and I could have worked well together.

Now, I couldn't very well take that hawk into the wanigan which I shared with Old Pete. Neither Old Pete nor I could stand the constant uproar in the main bunkhouse, so we'd patched up this wanigan and moved in together. Old Pete said I was all right but he didn't want any pet squirrels or other live things in our wanigan and, as a concession, he stopped placing the felt inner-liners of his gum shoepaks on the stove to dry. We'd made that agreement and we both lived up to it. So I took the hawk to the shed where they stored the winter tools and perched him on a long ice-bit between a window and four unopened drums of ice-ban. That way he could sit by the window and look out at the tundra, or go sideways along the bit and perch in the dark over the ice-ban.

We had ribmeat for supper that night and after it was over and most of the rest of them were sitting on the outside steps tossing bits of cotton-batting from the first-aid kit into the air for the swallows to catch and use for their nests, I went in to see the cook. The cook was a bitter man who hated being a cook but that was all he could do and that not too well.

"Raw meat!" The way he said it, you'd think I'd asked for his right arm to the pit. "Just got the wrinkles out of your belly with supper and now you want raw meat!" I didn't want to tell him why I wanted it, so I just walked out but later on the flunky told me to come around to the screened larder in the back and gave me a whole gunny sack full of ribs and there still was plenty of meat between them. The fat left on was waxy and yellow.

So far, I hadn't told anyone about my hawk in the tool shed. When I came around the side of the building and walked past the steps, I minded my own business and I think they should have done the same. Why couldn't I tell them I was just packing some ribmeat to a hawk? After all, what were they doing? They were

giving first-aid cotton-batting to some flying swallows. But that's the way it always was.

My hawk was hungry all right but he couldn't understand what I was trying to do. I tore off some strips of lean meat and held them up in front of him but he just crabbed away from me on the ice-bit. I grabbed him by the shanks with my left hand and we wrestled for it. He was snake-quick with his beak and tore my right glove to shreds. His wings were strong too and he raked me across the face with them every time I got that close. He was a big hawk with a wingspread of more than three feet.

I say we wrestled for it and I finally got him down. I got him alongside one of those ice-ban drums, held his legs with my left hand, put my knees on his wings and then stuffed his mouth full with my right hand. I'd hold his beak shut until he swallowed and then stuff it full again. After a while I felt his crop and it was solid and hard and round and I knew he was fed. I set him back on his perch and saw a whitish film drop down over his eyes—he was that full and sleepy.

I couldn't see anything wrong with this hawk. So why couldn't the damn thing fly? Why didn't he say the hawk equivalent of, "To hell with this noise! Me for the woods, Boy!"

I wondered about it that night and couldn't sleep and asked Old Pete about it. He said a hawk acting like that was probably too young to fly or didn't have his flight feathers yet, but that wasn't so. I could see that. It was something else.

A little after midnight, I got up and went out there again. The sun was just coming back up over the ridge it'd dipped behind an hour or so before. It was almost daylight and hundreds of ducks were flying over low, circling and settling down on one of the old dredge ponds and quacking in the brush and willows where they had their nests. A flock of swallows swarmed around me and followed me to the tool shed, flying so close I could see their open mouths and the green sheen on their backs and feel the gust of their flying on my cheeks. Just beyond the tool shed I saw a snowshoe rabbit quailed down in the middle of the gravel road just waiting for the end, and a weasel sneaking along in one of the ruts. I threw a rock ten inches to the left of the weasel and another one ten inches to the right of the rabbit.

My hawk was perched near the window in the pasty white of the new daylight. He had his yellow eyes wide open now and glared

at me coldly, not blinking. But he was a beautiful bird nevertheless. Every brownish-grey and speckled feather had just the right amount of overlap and each one fitted smoothly. He leaned forward on his perch, his wings away from his body as though hovering. The ruff on his neck moved with his head and there was something fascinating about the way those short feathers slid over the bird-oil surface of those below.

Looking at him so closely, I suddenly saw something else. For a moment I was almost sick. On top of his head and protruding through the feathers, were two white grubs. They were bluntly-pointed and wove back and forth in slow reaches like swivel-socketed horns. I picked up a thin twig then and held the hawk's attention by speaking to him in low tones. With the twig I gently prodded the things on his head. They disappeared and as they did, the hawk blinked his eyes and faintly clicked his throat, swallowing. I stood motionless until they reappeared and then saw how fat and roundly-shiny they were. They slipped back in again at the touch of the twig.

I rummaged through my things for a pair of tweezers, knowing very well I had no such thing. And I shouldn't have leaned over so far for so long spinning spinning a gyroidal-symphony-dynamo-spinning. Then I went to the blacksmith shop and found a pair of needle-nose pliers and felt better. It was no use though. That goddamn bird and I beat each other to frazzles but I couldn't pin him down and work the pliers all at the same time. After all, how the hell many hands and fingers and other means for grasping and holding does a man have? Should I have taken off my shoes and burlap socks and tried to work with my toes too? What I needed right then and there was a tail. Not a swallow and beaver rudder-tail. And not a long-haired, fly-swattin' tail. No! A big, brown, round, five-foot, workin' tail. A prehensile one with a big bare thumb on the end. A by-god prolongation of the rear end. But all the while I knew I couldn't wait around to grow one or have one grafted.

I went back to the wanigan and roused Old Pete. Old Pete disliked being roused but he'd roused me one night the winter before and made me spend an hour and a half outside in the lung-frosting cold, looking at the aurora in the sky which happened to be an awful red that night. Old Pete kept repeating, "That's blood! That's blood!" that night. Then he tried to bury his head with his shoulder blades as though fearful it would drip down on him. So, I owed Old Pete a rousing.

He loaded his pipe and we went back together. With both of us working hard, we managed to pin the hawk down and get him in position for me to work on him with my right hand. Every time I merely touched one of those fat shiny things in his head, it would slide back in and then we'd wait. I wanted to pour something like iodine or liquid bleach into those holes and chase them out that way, but Old Pete said no that might kill them on the inside and then the hawk's head would fester or the stuff might even corrode the hawk's brains for that matter.

"I'll smoke the bastards out!" That's what Old Pete suggested and that's what we decided to do.

Old Pete tamped a fresh charge into his pipe, lit it well and then blew into the bowl, sending the smoke out of the stem like a light-blue needle. That did it. As soon as the hot smoke hit them, they pushed out their blunt ends and held them there long enough for me to grip them with the pliers. Five I pulled out that way and then the two holes were empty. Old Pete blew smoke into one hole and it came out the other so we knew they were connected and we were also reasonably certain they were empty. They could have laid some eggs in there though.

These worms were shaped like tiny, peeled bananas, off-white and half an inch long. They were incredibly active and bent in their fat middles, touching their bluntly-pointed ends together—first to the left and then to the right. In unison they did this as though to the beat of a cadence. After a while, you had to look away or you'd catch yourself trying to bend with them. Count cadence, COUNT! We left them doing their drill on top of a drum and placed the hawk back on his perch.

Then we theorized. It was this or it was that or it was something else. We settled on rabbit worms which were only eggs when the parent birds made the strike and took the meal to the nest. That's what we settled on although we both suspected that rabbit worms died if they lost their host. And as for maggots, well, maggots always waited, didn't they?

On the way out, we noticed that the top of the drum was bare and there was no sign of the worms. I searched the dirt floor and ran my hands down the side of the drum but they were gone. Old Pete laughed. "I know," he said and sucked deep on his dirty old pipe, "out in the air like this, they get dried off. The air makes them brittle. They just try and try to bend and get lumpy from

straining and when they finally make it, they go 'snap' and spin away." We walked back to the wanigan. "Might be catchy," Old Pete said, looked at me sharply, snugged his head deep between shoulders. He took a complete bath then, using brown laundry soap, lathering it well and not rinsing too thoroughly. I smelled it every night for a long time.

Day by day after that, my hawk picked up. Holes healed. After the first few times, he knew when I came to feed him. I had to throw the ribs into the old dredge pond after a few days but the flunky arranged to let me have more whenever I asked. This was in exchange for my not calling him "flunky" when I wanted more coffee in the mess hall but calling him "waiter" instead. The cook woke him up at four every morning by hammering on his door with a crab-shaker's mallet.

About two weeks passed before I took my hawk outside. By this time he was quite tame and would sit on my left wrist as I fed him. I took him out into the bright sunlight, extended my arm and spun around and around, snapping him off my wrist when I had reached maximum momentum. He went through the air as though trussed, turning end over end, feathers ruffled and, obedient to the inexorable law of gravity, came down, landing in a willow-clump—ignominiously, screaming in astonishment. From then on, I took it easy. I pushed him off my wrist gently, permitting him to jump to the ground. After we'd practiced this a few times, he spread his wings wider and wider until at last he learned to sail. Then came the evening I tossed him to the roof of the tool shed and coaxed him to fly down for his food. Farther and farther he flew now and learned to circle and wheel. But always he returned to my outstretched wrist.

No one else around there liked hawks. Hawks? Jesusman! Hawks killed and lived on grouse and ptarmigan chicks and young pintails and gadwalls; they killed rabbits and red squirrels and thus caused a shortage of food for fur-bearing animals such as foxes and mink; they upset lemming cycles; they spread disease; they waylaid and murdered men lost on the vast stretches of barren tundra; they set fire to lonely trappers' cabins in the dead of arctic night. Hawks!

I should have known better but I didn't. It was raining the morning I decided to have my hawk spend the day on the roof of the tool shed. I thought the weather might help toughen him. When I returned that night, the air had cleared, it was a beautiful, soft evening and everyone was out throwing rocks. This hawk of mine

flew from roof to roof of all the shacks around there and each time he landed, a barrage of coarse gravel spattered around him. I was furious. I blew my stack into space. I stormed and blasphemed and also threw rocks and my aim was deadly. They thunked when they landed where I'd aimed. I was an efficient rocker that night, spinning and spinning. I threw them by the handful and singly, flat smoking trajectory and corkscrew curves that hopped before landing. And long after they had all gone inside, I still threw rocks. I threw them against the shack walls and the barn doors and bounced them off the white sign with the black arrow on it and the words underneath: "Mining Office."

Then I coaxed my hawk down and placed him on his perch on the ice-bit inside the winter-tool shed and knew it was now time to decide what to do.

The next night I carried him several miles back into one of the hydraulically-cut canyons, high with the putrescence of thawed mammoth flesh. There I threw him into the air and watched with pride and some satisfaction as he wheeled gracefully and then flew straight up the canyon. Straight he flew, his wings beating strong and steady until he was lost to my sight.

No one spoke to me about my hawk, not even Old Pete. If any of them knew what I'd done with him, they never mentioned it in my presence. I was somewhat shocked then one morning at breakfast a month later. One of them who sat across the table from me said to the one next to him, "That hawk with the allegahzoompatz worms in his head'll be back soon." He said it loud enough for all of them to hear and they all stopped eating for a few seconds. Just sat there and stirred their coffee and reached for things but didn't eat.

"Yeah?" the other one said, as though such information utterly astounded him. He was overwhelmed. "I hadn't heard about it!" He arched his eyebrows until they almost touched his hairline. "What's he doin', flyin' back for his supper?"

"Flyin'? Hell! That thing can't fly! He's walkin' back. Guys on the night shift saw 'im walkin' back across the point field. Walkin' along through three inches of water."

"Could be he's a duck hawk?" Loud, loud. Too loud for conversation.

"Nah! He was walkin', not paddlin'. Had his head down and leanin' into the wind; soppin' wet with his goop draggin' behind him. Wants his worms back, I guess. Wants to ask his daddy for his worms back. Hah!"

"His daddy wants him too. Lonesome! Wants to tell his hawk-boy somethin'—in hawk language yet!"

"Hawk-boy, you say?" Louder now and open-mouthed; loud to the point of spittle spraying. "I'll bet it's a hawk-girl! Just an ornery, egg-layin' bird-bitch! Just a . . . ."

Should I fight? Should I rise and cock back a stiff left for a hook? Knock their heads through their respective ani?

They all went back to eating again, rattling their cups and calling the flunky. They said, "Pass the blank sirup" and "Pass the blank bread" or "Pass the blanking paper" when they wanted the can of folded napkins. Everything had to be adjectivized with that one word.

Even if they were discussing merely the weather, just the sound of their voices disturbed me. I hated the way they had to clip their words and flip them from the corners of their mouths like grape seeds. At times, the most grating vibratory disturbance is that of the human voice.

I remember it well. After my cereal, I had a helping of fried potatoes and three pork chops but only one cup of coffee and then put my orange into my pocket for later. I went to work that morning but can't recall being productive. I picked a coffee can full of blueberries for lunch and then when it got time to knock off for the day, misjudged the hour. The truck was gone when I walked down the draw to where they had it parked, so I had to walk back to camp again that day.

It was late as I came up the gravel road into camp and I knew the cook would rather cut out his own heart, hash it with a dull knife, fry it in his own fat and scrape it off a skillet into that barrel by the sink, than feed me after hours. I headed for our wanigan and then saw them all sitting on the steps of the mess hall again—everyone with his big, shiny, washed, bare face pointed in my direction. I came abreast the winter-tool shed and saw him from the corner of my eye. He was perched on the end of a sawhorse at the side of the shed where they tossed the empty nail kegs. He was wet and bedraggled, perched hunched over.

Four times I tried to leave the wanigan that night but every time I stepped through the door, I saw them still sitting on the steps, smoking and batting ossmossquitoss. I waited till dark and they had all gone inside but then it was too late. I could not locate my hawk. He was not on the sawhorse where I'd seen him, nor was he on any of the roof ridges.

It was late in the season now and I had to wait longer for daylight. When it finally came, I prowled around and at last looked into one of the nail kegs directly beneath the sawhorse. There he was. He was stuffed down in there with his feet just clearing the lip of the keg. Pitched in there headfirst. Jammed tight. His claws were curled up in round, tight fists. I pulled him out by the shanks but he was stiff and rigid. As I lifted him up to the level of my eyes, something dropped. At first I thought it was an egg but then I saw that it was not. It was dead-white, blunt, and almost the size of my thumb. There was only one and what happened to it, I do not know.

I took my hawk then and a cutter-mattock and paced off about forty yards into the brush. There I peeled back a strip of brown-moss and laid him on the permafrost, replaced the moss and trod it down. And I stomped to a sudden quick cadence.

It was still very early in the morning and Old Pete woke up while I was packing my grip. I told him all about it but he didn't think there was anything too unusual about it.

"Came on a dead moose once," Old Pete said, "had his head full of those things. Peeled cucumbers. Had to cut them out. Got so big they couldn't get out of their breathing holes anymore." He ran a cold eye over everything I packed in my grip. When I clicked it shut, he reached for his socks and started pulling them on, gripping his ankle as though his foot were trying to escape. "Guess there's really no limit to the size they can grow," he said. "Just depends on what they're in. Just depends." Old Pete could be pensive at times. "I'd like to get me a real big one sometime and cut it open. See what one'd be like inside. Look Anse, you think they'd be solid white like that all the way through?"

All of them were unbearable at breakfast that morning, laughing though no one was telling stale jokes. When it was over, the flunky gave me a sandwich wrapped in wax paper and two left-over, hard-boiled eggs and I went to the Mining Office for my time. The time-keeper said he was sorry to see me go because I always worked regular hours and my sheet was so easy to fill out.

Then I walked out of the yard and down the gravel road. I was in the right-hand rut going around Pritchard's Bend when I met the mine superintendent walking toward me in the left-hand rut and he said, "Good-bye, Mr. Ansel." He said it pleasantly but that's all he said and that was the first time he'd ever spoken to me. I had a

bearing on the horizon and didn't take my eye off and didn't turn around this time although I know he did because I heard the crunching in the gravel behind me stop. It was some time before I heard it start up again.

Later that same day I bought all the things I thought I'd need, nasturizing all the menobinations equiponderantly. I bought too much. The weight of the pack was greater than I anticipated. My legs never gave out on me like that before. And the spinning the spinning, the cadence I beat. It was an excruciating grind getting all the way out here but I'm glad I stayed with it. It is very quiet.

I can't say that there is much pain. Just numbness and a galloping loss of ambulatory power—as though my legs are no longer a part of me. If I should accidentally gash one with my kindling axe, I doubt if it would hurt. But I do not chop much kindling. I am conserving my strength and when I am well again, I want to walk back someday and say "Good-bye" to that mine superintendent.

There's a high ridge to the north where I've never been and that too is on my list. Therefore I keep my exertions to a minimum and my chores simple. Every third day I manage a canvas bucket of water from the creek and make it last. I don't shave anymore nor primp too much for just myself. I don't comb my hair either—the teeth seem to get caught. And, for the time being, I have given up my habit of throwing rocks. My aim is gone and furthermore when I stoop down, my head begins to sway from side to side and even holding it with both my hands does not stop it immediately.

J. S. ATHERTON:

Finnegans Wake: "The Gist of the Pantomime"

Joyce set out to create for *Finnegans Wake* a new language. A language with so broad a spectrum of meaning that every word would involve all creation. Every word was pondered over; all its component parts were considered. Even the letters of the alphabet, "simple as a b c," have a history going back, as Joyce reminds us, "semper as oxhousehumper" (107/34),[1] through the generations to the Hebrew letters *aleph,* ox, *beth,* house, and *gimel,* camel. And just as God created the universe from "atoms and ifs" (455/16), so Joyce set out to create an image, a model, a microcosm of the universe as he saw it, in all its indeterminate complexity, although built not out of atoms but of letters.

There have been few writers who have had more control over their material than Joyce.[2] That the final result of the labor of seventeen years should be a bewildering chaos is precisely what he intended. This, he is telling us, is what the world is like. *Finnegans Wake* presents Joyce's *weltanschauung:* his final verdict on creation; and one conclusion is that it's a pantomime.

The word *pantomime* has several meanings. As might be expected Joyce uses all of them and suggests some new ones of his own. *Pantomimus* was the name given to a form of dramatic entertainment popular in imperial Rome in which one actor played all the parts. The title could be applied in this sense to *Finnegans Wake* where all the action takes place in the mind of one sleeping character, "that was everywans in turruns" (557/9). Indeed the first mention of pantomime in *Finnegans Wake* (32/11) is followed by a passage telling us that "Here Comes Everybody" is the nickname of H.C.E., and then by a description of a scene in a theatre. Pantomime also means an entertainment given in dumbshow. This mean-

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[1] Figures in parentheses refer to the page and line on which a quotation starts in *Finnegans Wake,* Faber, London, 1939.

There are many other references to the alphabet, *e.g.,* "allaphbed" (18/18), "allforabit" (19/2), and on pp. 167, 250, 492, 553, etc.

[2] "And at the end of it all, it must have seemed to him that he held English . . . in the hollow of his hand, for the English language too came at his call to do his bidding." John Eglinton, *Irish Literary Portraits,* London, 1935, p. 145.

ing is also applicable to *Finnegans Wake,* for although Joyce is occupied to an unparalleled extent with the exploitation of language the basic topic of his book is essentially mute. It is the silent city at night beside the flowing water of the Liffey. Writing of the third book, "The Four Watches of Shaun," Joyce told Miss Weaver that "in reality it is only a barrel rolling down the Liffey."[3] Joyce's original plan for this book is on the first page of one[4] of the notebooks included among the manuscripts presented by Miss Weaver to the British Museum. It begins: "Driftwood on △. Trunkles. Contredanse." △ is Joyce's sign for A.L.P., the Liffey. The note, and the early versions, seem to show that all the action of this chapter is based on the movement of flotsam on the surface of the Liffey.[5] It seems likely that every other incident and every other character in *Finnegans Wake* has a similar voiceless basis. Until Joyce "lifts the lifewand and the dumb speak" (195/5) even his gossiping washerwomen are only a tree and a stone on opposite banks of the river. So, since the characters are mute, it is in a way fitting to describe the entertainment as a pantomime. These first two meanings of the word: one man who is all characters and characters who are all mute, can be seen in one phrase Joyce wrote of himself and his book: "self exiled in upon his ego . . . writing the mystery of himsel in furniture" (184/6).

But for Joyce, as for anyone who spent his childhood in the British Isles, the word *pantomime* means first and foremost the annual Christmas performance at the theatre. It is a peculiarly English form of entertainment and attempts to export it have only been successful when, like George L. Fox's American pantomime of Humpty Dumpty[6] and the performances at the *Théâtre des Funambules* in Paris, it was changed into something quite unlike the British pantomime. Even in England it is accepted as being ridiculous; and as a colloquial expression "It's a pantomime!" means that the whole thing is absurd, that the organization—if there ever was any—has broken down so that nobody really knows what is happening, but

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[3] British Museum, Add. MS. 47489. Extract from a letter dated May 24, 1924.

[4] Add. MS. 47482 A.

[5] The only living character, the "I" of the early versions and the "we" of *Finnegans Wake,* appears to be a donkey! For this idea, and for the suggestion that this article should be written, I am indebted to Adaline Glasheen.

[6] Allusions to this may be hidden among the hundreds of mentions of Fox and Humpty Dumpty in *Finnegans Wake,* but both words have many other implications, *e.g.,* "Mr. Fox" was Parnell's alias; Brer Fox, Reynard the Fox, the German *fuchs,* are all brought in, and Fox-Davies's book on civic heraldry was used by Joyce.

the situation as a whole is amusing. Joyce was aware of the defects of his own methods and certainly had this colloquial meaning in mind when he called his work a "puntomime" (587/8) and a "punnermine" (519/3). In the phrase "the gist of the pantomime" (599/36) he is extending it further and describing the whole course of history "in this drury world of ours" (600/2) as a pantomime in this sense.

The plot of a British pantomime is based on a children's story or nursery rhyme, but the plot is practically lost sight of beneath a confusion of comic business, music hall turns, dances, popular songs and topical gags.[7] The method of composition Joyce employed for *Finnegans Wake* has much in common with what must be the way of writing the script of a pantomime. He began by writing down a simple story—often a childishly simple story—on the right-hand pages of a notebook. And, as can be seen from a brief inspection of the notebooks now preserved in the British Museum, he then added all kinds of material between the lines and on the left-hand pages. He then copied the whole thing out, with all the additions, onto the next empty right-hand pages and crossed the first version out in colored crayon. A fresh set of additions was then made and treated in the same way, and this process was repeated perhaps three or four times before a fair copy in ink was made and again revised and augmented. Typescripts which followed were treated in the same way, and even the early printed versions were added to again and again, so that finally the original story was even more completely buried under an accumulation of detail than is the plot of an English pantomime under the variety of extraneous entertainment. Joyce's additions were in some ways very like the material the pantomime composer uses. He put in puns, riddles, rhymes, songs, dances,[8] and cross-talk comedian acts such as those by Jute and Mutt on pp. 16-18 and Muta and Juva on pp. 609-610. Allusions to pantomime began to be inserted about 1925, and it was probably about that time that he decided he was writing a sort of pantomime himself.

An example of Joyce's early versions may be given from the last

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[7] Bloom was "prevented . . . from completing a topical song . . . commissioned by Michael Gunn, lessee of the Gaiety Theatre . . . South King Street . . . to be introduced into . . . the grand annual Christmas pantomime *Sinbad the Sailor* . . ." *Ulysses,* Bodley Head, 1941, p. 639.

[8] For instance, "the tabarine tamtammers of the whirligigmagees. Beats that cachucha flat" (27/20), the polka (236/16); and I am indebted to Mr. M. J. C. Hodgart for pointing out that Toulouse-Lautrec and his models perform a cancan at the "flea pantamine" on p. 531.

book of the *Wake,* in which there were fewest additions. I have chosen the passage about St. Kevin which the authors of *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* describe as "one of the most charming in the book."[9] The first version of this[10] is written in pencil in a large hand lengthways down a double sheet of unruled foolscap. A wide margin has been left on the left-hand side down which numbers have been written. Some of the numbers have been altered during the process of composition but are easily distinguished. The manuscript runs:

1 Kevin born on the island of Ireland
[2]* in the Irish ocean goes to Lough
2 Glendalough, where pious Kevin
3 lives alone on an isle in the
4 lake on which isle is a pond
5 in which is an islet whereon
holy Kevin builds a beehive hut
the floor of which most holy
Kevin excavates to a depth of
one foot after which done
venerable Kevin goes to the
lakeside and fills time after time
6 a tub with water which
time after time most venerable
Kevin empties into the cavity in
his hut thereof creating a pool
having done which blessed Kevin
half fills the tub once with
water which tub then most
7 blessed Kevin sets in the centre
of the pool after which
8 Saint Kevin fixes up his
frock to his loins and seats
himself blessed S. Kevin in
his hiptubbath where as the
9 ardour Doctor . . . .

*In the MS this numeral, without brackets, has a transverse line through it.

If the marginal numbers are compared with the text it will be seen that Joyce is making a series of concentric circles on land and water: 1. Ireland; 2. lake; 3. island; 4. pond; 5. islet; 6. flooded cavity; 7. bath tub; 8. water in tub; 9. Kevin. Originally the series seems

[9] *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake,* J. Campbell and H. M. Robinson, Faber, London, 1947, p. 282, note 2, carried over to p. 283.

[10] Add. MS. 47488 f. 24. I am indebted to Miss Weaver, the owner of the copyright, for permission to publish this extract. She remembers typing it out for Joyce in 1923.

to have been ten (counting the Irish Sea as the first) but nine is a more canonical number. Joyce then filled in the passage with various sets of sevens chosen to match the character of St. Kevin. I am indebted to Mr. M. J. C. Hodgart for a note that "The texture has been thickened by the addition of seven of the canonical hours, seven of the nine orders of angels, the seven orders of Holy Order, seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, seven sacraments . . ." But most readers will agree that the initial fable is somewhat childish; indeed, similar situations are described in many tales for children. Joyce is embroidering upon the fabric of a story for children just as the pantomime writers do.

The pantomimes Joyce saw as a child must have been those presented at the Gaiety Theatre, South King Street, Dublin, a theatre mentioned several times both in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. It is probably because he was taken there for treats as a child that he calls the King Street theatre the "king's treat house" (32/26). The lessees and managers of the theatre were the Gunn family, particularly Michael Gunn, whose name appears in *Ulysses*[11] and is mutated a dozen different ways in *Finnegans Wake*. "The Gunn family occupied a prominent place in Dublin"[12] and Joyce compares them, as theatre managers and producers, with the Creator of the universe. "Gun, the farther" (481/19), Mr. Michael Gunn, becomes H.C.E. as "Mr. Makeall Gone" (220/24). They control both the "Gods"—or gallery—and the pit in the theatre. By a switch which is elementary in *Finnegans Wake* this makes them lords of Heaven and Hell. Joyce professes to envy their opportunities: "were I our pantocreator would theirs be tights for the gods" (551/7). When Shaun wishes to take a solemn oath he says, "And I . . . truthfully declaret before my Geity's Pantokreator . . ." (411/14). In both cases there is a pun on two possible meanings of "pantocreator": the producer of a pantomime, and the All-creator from the Greek prefix *panto:* all. Shaun's oath also provides an example of Joyce's care for every letter. There is a pun on the Dublin Gaiety and the Greek word *ge:* earth. The spelling of the following word is altered from *pantocreator* to *Pantokreator* to underline the Greek pun and bring in the Byzantine concept of God the Son as all-Creator. There are so many other allusions to the Gunns that it may be said that the word *gun* in *Finnegans Wake* almost always refers to them rather than to a weapon. For example:

[11] See note 7 above.
[12] St. John Ervine, *The Theatre in My Time*, London, 1933, p. 50.

"Guns. And it was written up in big capital. Guns" (368/3), is partly telling us how the Gunns had their name outside their theatre. The word *gunnfodder* (242/10) carries as its first significance not "cannonfodder" but gossip, because there were so many topical allusions in the Gunns' pantomimes that all the gossip in Dublin was food for them.

British pantomimes in the early nineteenth century opened with a fable which was suddenly altered by a transformation scene into a harlequinade. But owing to the success of a series of famous clowns, beginning with Grimaldi (55/35) and going on to Whimsical Walker, who did not die till 1934, the clowning became more and more important until the harlequinade was either omitted or restricted to one short scene at the end. "Only Walker himself is like Waltzer, whimsicalissimo they go murmurand" (473/3) sounds like a description of this displacement of dancers by clowns. But Dublin pantomimes in the 1890's still included a harlequinade as a final spectacle, so Joyce includes one in *Finnegans Wake.* Harlequin and Columbine are occasionally mentioned in such phrases as "let harleqwind play peeptomine up all our colombinations" (360/36). *"Galloper Troppler and Hurleyquinn"* (48/15) is the second part of Joyce's title for a pantomime he promises us which turns out to be *"The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies"* (219/18), a section in which many aspects of pantomime in *Finnegans Wake* are seen most clearly.

This section opens with four pages parodying a theatre programme and possibly based on an actual Dublin Gaiety Theatre programme. It begins with a Joycean version of the customary announcements of times of performance, admission charges, names of distinguished patrons, and mention of the first London performance. Then comes a list of the actors, who are the main characters of the *Wake,* suitably modified. The usual acknowledgments to the purveyors of theatrical properties include "Dances arranged by Harley Quinn and Coollimbeina" (221/25), and "Jests, jokes, jigs and jorums for the Wake." Such programmes often contained a summary of the plot headed "Argument." Joyce makes a wilful abuse of the word with "An argument follows." Finally we are told that the performance is "to be wound up . . . by a Magnificent Transformation Scene showing the Radium Wedding of Neid and Moorning and the Dawn of Peace, Pure, Perfect and Perpetual, Waking the Weary of the World" (222/16).

The transformation scene is one of the main ingredients of panto-

mime and one of the reasons for its appearance in *Finnegans Wake.* The device was most popular during the middle of the nineteenth century. Henry Morley in *The Journal of a London Playgoer,* published in 1881, describes performances in the 1860's in which every scene was transformed: kitchens into ballrooms, streets into enchanted islands, shops into magicians' caves; and all the costumes of the actors were simultaneously altered to match their new surroundings. Later it became customary to confine the transformation to the final scene. Usually the set became a ballroom with a magnificent staircase down which the actors made their final entrances in costumes as magnificent as the resources of the company would allow. In *Finnegans Wake* the transformation scene is dawn, the wedding of night and morning that was promised on page 222, and comes, according to convention, in the final scene. This begins on page 615 with a letter from A.L.P. to God—"Dear . . . Reverend . . . Majesty"—justifying the actions of her husband, H.C.E. What follows is at one and the same time a transformation scene and the dying speech of the river as it flows into the sea as night becomes morning: transformations both.

To show that this is a transformation scene, Joyce wove the titles of all the usual pantomimes into the text. That "goldylocks" (615/23) and Jack and the Beanstalk ("jerk of a beamstark"—/25) are pantomimes and not simply the nursery tales is shown by the word "pulltomine" (—/24) which comes between them. Fairygodmothers (617/18) and Bluebeard (—/21) "we may add to this stage" (619/9) with the word *stage* reinforcing the theatrical overtones and suggesting that even Humpty Dumpty in this section (619/8; 628/11) is the pantomime rather than the Lewis Carroll character.

Then the actual transformation takes place. It is a tenderly beautiful passage, although tenderness is not a usual characteristic of Joyce's writing. "Soft morning, city! Lsp! I am leafy speafing. Lpf! Folty and folty all the nights have falled on to long my hair" (619/20). Liffey is flowing out to sea as night becomes morning: the old lady, Anna Livia, is dying. Her dress, magnificent as nature's resources will allow, is made out of the leaves that fall upon her surface. She is "exquisitely pleased about the loveleavest dress" (624/21). "The woods are fond always," says Liffey. "As were we their babes in. And robins in crews so." We are being reminded of the scene in the pantomime Babes in the Wood when the two sleeping children are covered with leaves by friendly robins. Another pantomime, Robinson Crusoe, has also been woven in, and others follow: Old

King Cole, Sinbad the Sailor, Sleeping Beauty, Aladdin, Snow White, Goody Two Shoes, Puss in Boots, Ali Baba, and Little Red Riding Hood.[13] "The beardwig I found in your Clarksome bag (625/2) contributes to the stage atmosphere with its reminder of Willie Clarkson, the greatest of all theatrical wigmakers and a master of "makeup" (625/5). A.L.P. was "A princeable girl" (626/27), she says. The Principal Girl is the title given to the heroine of any pantomime. H.C.E. was "The pantymammy's Vulking Corsergoth," which sounds as if he had been the Demon King: the pantomime villain.

But she is leaving him. We have reached the end of the *Wake*. The magic is fading. Soon everything will be revealed by daylight in its ordinary shape. The washerwomen will be stone and tree; H.C.E. a collection of houses; A.L.P. a moving water. So in the pantomime of Cinderella when the clock strikes twelve . . . The image is hardly apparent even after many readings of Joyce's final passage, but once observed it adds greatly to the total effect. The carriage becomes a mere pumpkin: "I thought you were all glittering with the noblest of carriage. You're only a bumpkin. I thought you the great in all things, in guilt and in glory. You're but a puny. Home!" (627/22). She is going—along with her sisters, the rivers of the world—to meet the father of waters.

But the great curve of *Finnegans Wake* sweeps us round again, back to where we started, in accordance with the cyclic theory of history that Joyce adopted from Vico. Yet as the cycle of great events swings round, small things endure and rest unchanged. So we are told in a sentence by Edgar Quinet which Joyce admired so much that he quotes it once in its elegant French original (281/4) and twice parodies it at full length (14/35; 236/19). Quinet chose wild flowers as examples of the things that endure; the weeds that grew unnoticed beneath the walls of Troy still flower above Troy's ruins. In *Finnegans Wake* "the wild flowers are the lilts of children."[14] In this connection it is interesting to recall an idea of Isaac D'Israeli: "Many of the games of our children were played by Roman boys; the mountebanks, with the dancers and tumblers on their movable stages, still in our fairs, are Roman. . . . Among these Roman diver-

[13] These occur at the following places: 619/26, 620/7, 620/36, 621/5, 622/2, 10, 11, 23, 28.

[14] From a letter to Miss Weaver, Nov. 1930, published in *Envoy*, Dublin, V. 17. Slocum and Cahoon in their *Bibliography of James Joyce*, London, 1953, date this issue correctly as April, 1951, but some copies, presumably for the American market since the price is stated as "60 cents," are dated May, 1951.

sions certain comic characters have been transmitted to us. . . . The speaking pantomimes . . . are from this ancient source."[15]

Joyce had certainly read *Curiosities of Literature* and his second parody of the Quinet sentence succeeds in recalling the D'Israeli passage as well. He begins, "Since the days of Roamaloose and Rehmose . . . ," putting D'Israeli's "Roman boys" in place of Quinet's "Pline et . . . Columelle." In the rest of the passage he is listing dances as things that endure: pavanes, waltzes, reels, rigadoons, down to ragtime and the cancan. But the idea that pantomime could be used to exemplify the returning cycle of events would occur to Joyce without any literary prompting. It approaches the image Joyce uses of the world as a stage for a "stock company" (510/17) in which all the heroes are played by the leading man, all the heroines by the leading lady. Who played Othello plays Hamlet, Desdemona becomes Ophelia, and so on as each actor performs the part allotted to him by "the producer (Mr. John Baptiser Vickar)" (255/27) or "the compositor of the farce of dustiny" (162/2). When the play is over they are "carried off the set and brought home to be well soaped, sponged and scrubbed again" (220/16). Even when the human actor dies the play will still go on as "like the newcasters in their old plyable" (388/7) new casts take over old plays, giving Joyce one more level to his parable, one more reflection of the image of his thought in the perspective to infinity between the parallel mirrors of his technique, as "new garrickson's" (55/35), new sons of Garrick, renew the garrison.

With pantomime this is still more obvious. Every Christmas the pantomime returns to the British stage and parents take their children to see shows to which they themselves were taken as children by their own parents. "Here we are again" is the traditional introductory remark of clowns. Joyce is obviously comparing the world to a pantomime when he writes: "Ah, sure, pleasantries aside, in the tail of the cow what a humpty daum earth looks our miseryme heretoday as compared beside the Herewearegain Gaieties of the Afterpiece when the Royal Revolver of these real globoes lets regally fire of his *mio colpo* for the chrisman's pandemon to give over and the Harlequinade to begin properly SPQueaRking Mark Time's Finist Joke. Putting Allspace in a Notshall" (455/23). The world as we know it, "our miseryme heretoday," is "a humpty daum earth," we are told, and "humpty daum" combines Humpty Dumpty with a German version of Tom Thumb to suggest something that is small and fallen

[15] Isaac D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, "The Pantomimical Characters."

but is also a pantomime. "Chrisman's pandemon" is another bilingual pun. The obvious suggestion is Christmas pantomime, the word *pandemon* is Greek for "belonging to all the people," and Joyce was probably thinking also of "pandemonium," and possibly of the Hall of the Devils in *Paradise Lost.* The pantomime of human life, Joyce is saying, will be transformed at the last day into the harlequinade of heaven. The Joycean tangle of jokes and puns that ends the passage seems to have little to do with pantomime[16] unless it is intended as an example of pantomime's contents. But the capitalization of the word *Gaieties* shows that Joyce is still thinking of the pantomime as taking place at the Dublin theatre.

The Gaiety is mentioned again when Joyce writes of another pantomime: the "Christmas pantaloonade, *Oropos Roxy and Pantharhea* at the Gaiety" (513/21), the title of which provides the best example I know of Joyce's ability to cram every aspect of creation into a single phrase. At a first glance *Oropos Roxy* suggests Oedipus Rex, and *Pantharhea* recalls the maxim of Heraclitus, *panta rhei:* everything flows. So the title seems to suggest an unending series of battles between fathers and sons, and sons and mothers. But *panta rhei* also suggests a river, and looking backwards from there we find that *Oropos* reversed gives us *soporo,* a transitive verb in classical Latin that in the Latin of the Fathers means simply "I sleep." Taken with the suggestions of rocks in *Roxy* the words then give us a picture of the sleeping mountain and the flowing river. *Pantharhea* recalls the panther that disturbed the Englishman's sleep in *Ulysses* and the "phanthares" (565/19) that disturbed the sleeping child in *Finnegans Wake.* The Hill of Howth and Dublin are sleeping but their sleep is troubled with dreams. Another city, besides Dublin, is hidden in the phrase. *Oropos,* or *Oropus,*[17] in Boeotia was the center of the cult of Amphiaraus, who, being betrayed by his wife, enjoined his son to kill her—which he did. But Amphiaraus was smitten by the divine thunderbolt[18] and buried in a cleft in the rocks *(Roxy).* To parallel this interpretation of *Oropos* the word *Pantharhea* is probably

[16] It is, however, connected with the stage since there is a double reference to Hamlet, and "globoes" recalls the Globe Theatre. "SPQueaRking" shows us how, "the sheeted dead (S.P.Q.R.) Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets." The apposition of space and a nutshell recalls Hamlet's remark about being "bounded in a nutshell," as well as Nut: the Egyptian Goddess of Space.

[17] There was a famous theatre there.

[18] Thunder is one of the important themes in *Finnegans Wake* and has been mentioned by many writers. We are also told that Joyce disliked it and "a clap of thunder would send him cowering into a windowless closet." Herbert Gorman, *James Joyce,* p. 121.

meant as a combination of Panthera and Rhea. Panthera, according to an ancient Jewish myth,[19] was a Roman centurion who was the father of Christ. Joyce may have found the story for himself, but it is more probable that he took it from Thomas Hardy's poem "Panthera" in *Time's Laughing Stocks*. Hardy gives his own twist to the situation by bringing Panthera back to be the centurion in charge at the crucifixion, and it is probably this version that Joyce is hoping his readers will recall. His own "Christmas pantaloonade" has another twist, for the spelling must have been intended to bring in the name *Rhea*. There were two mythical women of this name. One was the wife of Saturn who gave him stones ("rocks" again?) to eat and so saved her son, Zeus. The other was the mother of Romulus and Remus, types of the warring sons like Joyce's Shem and Shaun. In fact, what Joyce is saying is that the pattern of history, mythology, family relationships, and *Finnegans Wake* itself, is simply a pantomime.

For over a century almost all British pantomimes have adhered to the convention that a young lady must play the part of the hero or "Principal Boy." To balance the sexes one of the male comedians is always dressed as a woman and usually plays the part of the hero's mother. When Shaun speaks of "the yella perals that all too often beset green gerils," he gives as one example "playing breeches parts . . . in flesh-coloured pantos instead of earthing down in the coal-hole trying to boil the big gun's dinner" (434/8). The "pantos" here are both pantomimes and the flesh-coloured tights worn by the actress who takes the part of Principal Boy. It will also be noticed that the word *panto* brings in another pun on "gun." The pun on "pantos" is not—in my opinion—a very good one, but Joyce makes it twice. The other time is at the end of the children's games with "You're well held now, Missy Cheekspeer, and your panto's off" (257/19). The primary meaning here is that the games are over and the child who has been play-acting is going to be spanked. We are also told that the pantomime is finished and that the part of Shakespeare, the Principal Boy, has been played—in accordance with convention—by a young lady. It is probable that all the other changes in sex in *Finnegans Wake*[20] fit into the same pattern.

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[19] The earliest surviving mention of Panthera is a refutation of the Jewish story by Origen in *Contra Celsum* (Migne, *Origen*, I, 719-725). The story is repeated in the Babylonian Talmud (*Tract. Sab.* ff. 67, 104), revised in the medieval *Toldoth Jeschu*, and brought up again in the nineteenth century. See *The Jewish Life of Christ, being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, translated from the Hebrew . . . ed. G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, London, 1885.

[20] Mohammed and Napoleon each appears once as a woman. See my "Islam and the Koran in *Finnegans Wake*," *Comparative Literature*, Oregon, IV (1954), p. 245.

Even the minor details of pantomime figure in the *Wake*. Everything "from cannibal king to the property horse" (599/36) comes in somewhere or other, and it seems unlikely that Joyce was relying entirely on his memory for all this. Indeed some of the information he uses could hardly have been acquired by him from watching stage performances. One book which he certainly used is *A Playgoer's Memories* by H. G. Hibbert, published in 1920 just before Joyce started to compose the *Wake*. Hibbert was a genial gentleman who for many years edited *Era,* the English actors' paper, and had an immense fund of information about the London theatre, much of which he poured into his books. When Joyce used a book he always seemed to have hidden an acknowledgment to it somewhere in his text. His reference to H. G. Hibbert, "howldmoutherhibbert" (388/29), fits too closely to be kind. Old Mother Hubbard is, of course, a pantomime. Much of Joyce's material for the pantomime references comes from Hibbert, along with many other varied pieces of information on topics such as Sweeney Todd, Johnny MacDougal, Maria Martin, Hickory Wood, and Cryptoconchoidsyphonostomata, all of which appear in both *A Playgoer's Memories* and *Finnegans Wake*. The only one of these which concerns pantomime is Hickory Wood (98/35-6), who was a writer of pantomime scripts.

Joyce gave even to the words of pantomime an attention which they seldom receive and never deserve. The scripts, by authors such as Hickory Wood and H. J. Byron ("our Byron"—author of "our boys": 41/16), were full of puns and riddles—"punns and reedles" (239/35), says Joyce. They were written in loose rhymed couplets that Joyce appears to be describing when he writes of the four old men "yambing around with their old pantometer, in duckasaloppics" (386/5). "Yambing" suggests walking and the iambic foot. "Pantometer" is the kind of metre used in pantomime and also every kind of metre. "Duckasaloppics" makes the verse of these Shropshire[21] lads sound duck-footed and sloppy, but is it meant to be taken seriously? The pantomime, as "Yambing" suggests, is just a leg show. But there is always a serious meaning underlying Joyce's clowning and *panto meter,* taken as two Greek words, recalls the maxim of Protagoras, *anthropos metron panton:* "Man is the measure of all things."

[21] "Saloppics" contains *Salop,* the usual English abbreviation for Shropshire. Joyce is slyly suggesting that the metres used in A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad* resemble the metres used in pantomime.

The pun seems far-fetched, even for Joyce. But it is certain that an even more extraordinary one frequently recurs in *Finnegans Wake*. Pantomime may be taken as meaning "all imitation." So Joyce suggests that Plato's theories as to the nature of reality and art amount to saying that everything is a pantomime. Things as we know them are a *mimesis:* "We're umbas all" (214/7). Art is a *mimesis* of a *mimesis:* "shadows shadows multiplicating" (281/18). The true reality is in the Platonic heaven: "Mere man's mime: God has jest" (486/9). Even *Finnegans Wake* is a mere dim *mimesis* of the genuine masterpiece that God reads: "Every dimmed letter in it is a copy and not a few of the silbils and wholly words I can show you in my Kingdom of Heaven" (424/32). The parallel may be absurd, indeed Joyce says that it is absurd: "My herrings! The surdity of it! Amean to say. Her bare idears, it is choochoo chucklesome" (538/18). Bare ideas are, according to Plato, the true reality. The world as we know it is at one remove from this, art is at two removes. The word *tootoological* (468/8) seems to summarise Joyce's comment.

The conclusion to be drawn from Joyce's treatment of the entire theme of pantomime appears to be that in his opinion life is meaningless, repetitive, traditional, and yet entertaining. But it must be stated that this is only one of the many conclusions which can justly be drawn from *Finnegans Wake* and the present article makes no claim to do more than explain a part of one section of one level of the book. Indeed the present state of our knowledge of it is well described in the words of Thornton Wilder,[22] who is one of the most distinguished of the admirers of Joyce's work: "Some day the mighty book will be accessible even to the hasty reader, its buried patterns revealed, its secrets and mystifications and teases elucidated. I shall not live to see that day; but I shall not regret being among those of the first generation for whom it was an all but impenetrable jungle. We had the excitement and fun and awe-struck wonder of first glimpsing the order in the greatness and the greatness of the order."

[22] In a letter to the present writer dated Jan. 28, 1954.

E. E. CUMMINGS:

Poem

—laughing to find
anyone's blind
(like me like you)
except in snow—

a whom we make
(of grin for smile
whose head's his face
with stones for eyes

for mind with none)
boy after girl
each brings a world
to build our clown

—shouting to see
what no mind knows
a mindless he
begins to guess

what no tongue tells
(such as ourselves)
begins to sing
an only grin—

dancing to feel
nots are their whys
stones become eyes
locks open keys

haven't is have
doubt and believe
(like me like you)
vanish in so

—laughing to find
a noone's more
by far than you're
alive or i'm—

crying to lose
(as down someone
who's we ungrows)
a dream in the rain

GRACE CARNOT:

The Panther

The bars he never saw: those silver lights
Of steel which weighted him like lilies. In his sight
Were children, trees, and country paths that slid
Beyond him, echoing his captiveness and hiding
Freedom from him. Visitors saw him
Safely, aptly patient, and watched that slim
Dream of self vanish in their keeping
And leave the world to sun, and, later, sleeping.

His eyes burdened him. The landscape was alive
With faces white as dolls', each one contrived
To keep its curiosity like a smile
As he crept up and down his endless mile.
Each day brought him to night again, the same
As the day before had done—each holding its lame
Tomorrow like a whispering sterile beast
Who knows its cage grows, everywhere, unceasing.

The zoo was silent in the afternoon,
Except for children. They did not mind that moon
Of blackness stationed in its ashen tree
Which made it seem that night was always there.
He slept, thick-coiled, a python in a tree.
Only a god could sleep as long as he.

JASCHA KESSLER:

Katabolism, or, The Natural History of Love

1

The green giant blooms under damnation,
The muted ecstasies of dying realms,
Suppressed elegance. The hothouse roaches
Lope along lianas on their roach affairs.
Hot, hot under glass, the dour pineapple,
The acidless lemon, browngold and yellow,
Ripen without honor, athletes and esthetes.
The frogs squat steaming in bowers of blood,
And tumorous copper carp fin idly
At the conduit. There is nothing but life.

2

There is nothing but life but love. The pyre,
The searing mantle, the egg in embers,
The new pinions, a hundred years of youth,
Earth, air, water, the greenhouse sun at noon,
Is heaven in a pot, Adam virgin
Maundering in his sterile zoo. When she comes,
Swanking to his sheets, the dust lusts in the
Desert, and time begins society:
The sun runs, the moon is pregnant with stars,
Under domes of glass there is laughter.

3

Their flesh walks on tidy paths. Nimble Jack
And Nimble Jill, in the hothouse jungle,
Their fathers kings, queens were their mothers.
They walk, they talk. They sit, they smoke, and they
Kiss. Power laughs at mumblings in the bush:
Cities rise new in their arms, their arts conquer
Men: there is no other choice but to love.
Old closing time shoos them kindly. Outside
It is snowing. Their selves of laughter meet
Their tears. There is nothing but love but death.

T. WEISS:

This Narrow Stage

Asia on the one side,
Afric on the other, and such divers
under-kingdoms that the actor,
coming in, must ever begin
with telling where he is?

The first scene surely
needs no wordy explanation:
three Ladies strolling together
to gather flowers, a matter of May
summers in their hands;

each thing in its kind
sheltered under revery's wide
eyelids, we seem to tread the verge
of song, the graces' ever-green,
that time's mad rivers are

beguiled. But by and by
and in the same place, we hear
news of shipwreck: a distraught shape,
the turmoil and the horror proud—
to reach such gentle apex—

in its eye; hit by darts
subtler than his, salty Neptune,
rolling in storm cresting the storm
and flung to mortality's shoal,
drowns in its sweetness.

Can airs from Ladies,
swelling though their skirts
may be, and sighs from ruffled seas
so intermingle? Yet what unities
have we but circumstance

must grant them? Ladies
are persuasive; shipwrecks bear
their own exclusive cargo. But when
the one enfolds the other (fair
plumes and perfumes giddy

with the stir) hard put
indeed each player is to tell—
himself as well as others—where he
may be, the many under-kingdoms
wrangling for their chance

upon this narrow stage, Asia
on the one side, Afric on the other.

VIRGINIA KIDD:

In the Public Interest

Let us be catholic
As hell, and with the earliest intention; prolix: (hard)
We want our mother. Saying what sufficed for simple hurts,
Put votive candle to the egg, proposing little rest.
Not forgiveness, only lien on the maternal breast—
Proposing to examine what we most forget:
Habit's hiding skirts, the apostolic yards.

No more dumping, please.
By all sorts and throes of dying things
This lot has been improved. All ready love of cats is buried near;
Moist in state of nature mirrors brook to bound this rubble; fenced
To curious lookers; outbuildings' disrepair still flanks
The ruined manor; and luck is down to snake-eyes in the grass.
Spotting the die's fall is for knees and crawling; springs
Spat from couches intervene. And even this incautious hand plucks
fear

From coil and rattle; cold in the springing green antagonisms sensed
Whose seats are in the blood. Mattressed and lapsing chairs in ranks
With bedsteads cushion the old hungers; lean years by sevens in the glass.

Nun's province was no clutter, and these gardens private once.
She must have gone away, and never warned us we would lack
Her services, her tidy labors in our wake, and her devotion.
Kneel without prayer beside bed gone so to seed; sorting remains.
Post God no bills.

Before Her Life Her Eyes

Afraid? Of water—that one, who went down in foam?
Well, she cannot dive. But have you seen her swim? Look, is that awkward,
Under the echoing wet? Fleet among boys? The unlaboring lung
Of her unsounded still—minutes go by like fish
Until I gasp for silly air, and envy of born ease
Just watching. No fear in her. . . . You trouble for her stare?
Always, like that, for fear of missing something:
Lunging, this time, with wide eyes to gain
The rented locker key we dive for blind
And deeper than a man, on the stained
Concrete pool-bed. See her rise, a fourth time,
Thrashing where she treads, beating the water, whose buoyant
Body better floats unaided; for her, it's sinking that is work.

Be convinced. It is the city's chlorine bloodied her eyes,
And makes them smart. And that old key in salvage
Like a pearl gives her the game; our game, the game we played.
Swimmers looking blind, like me, don't find the token.
Her scream is high for joy. You drown your joke, assuming her afraid.

And could you pull her struggling to this ground, a child to save,
When the oblivious guard, her self, and her companions force her brave?

REX WORTHINGTON:

Love

"OK, let's join the bird gang," he said, his voice at twelve o'clock resonant and imperious, so that at first one was fooled. And then the gesture, at complete odds with the voice, the arms lifted mechanically to form a V, and then, as though sprung from that area of tension, his arms and outspread hands smacked sharply against his body. People looked at him—the drinkers at the bar with mute childlike surprise, and Harold, the manager of the club, lighting his cigar under his hawk nose, with ill-concealed interest, looking first at the flame of his match and next at him. He always panicked under their eyes, finding release in a mad pursuit—suddenly moving to clean all the glasses and bottles off the bar. The habitual drinkers were used to this sally and jerked their bottles right back. He retreated, dervishing awkwardly behind the bar, an object of titters now, but recovered rapidly and moved toward the cash register. Calmly he rang up one cent, put a coin in the till and turned to face them, his arms folded at ease across his chest, and his face a little arrogant, supercilious, lifted above them to stare at the opposite wall. They laughed too much or too little as though they had seen more than they wanted, and they lifted their glasses and looked into them, to ease the moment, and lit cigarettes. Sometimes a newcomer asked, "What is it? What makes him do it?" Harold said, "I don't know. Willie reminds me of a woman in heat. He's got things on his mind, you know, like he was all shut up in a barrel, just waiting to be tapped. Sometimes I have half a mind to fire him." With that he emphatically blew out a puff of smoke and began to cough, a great wheezing cough that reduced him suddenly from dignity into a veritable paroxysm, that caused the snot to flow, and still coughing he said, "All right, folks, drink 'em up. You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here," and he went onto the floor to hurry the drinkers at their tables.

Many managers had come and gone in Willie's time. He was the oldest employee, in point of faithful service, of the Arnold J. Haverman Post, No. 436, Veterans of Foreign Wars. In 1934 he had joined the Post "to take my cup from friendly hands," and he was such a sober,

mild, and unpretentious fellow on his side of the bargain, that hardly a year had passed before he was asked to accept a full-time bartender's position. "He'll be a good man," they said. "He'll take all the shit they throw at him, and never give any trouble. A steadying influence, that's what we need. People are talking about us, you know, they say we're a bunch of drunkards down here." Willie had been unemployed since he made his dramatic and near-fatal departure from his farm a year and a half before. That was the day he went into the stall of gentle Bessie, who had a game leg, the vital cord of which Willie touched and was so roundly kicked that he just managed to make his way back to the barnyard where he fell unconscious. There was a store a mile away to which Mrs. Fox ran and conveyed her desperation in French for several minutes, before Mr. Stump could understand that Willie was hurt, and telephoned the hospital.

Willie was in the hospital for nearly two months, through the cold, dismal part of the winter. This undoubtedly helped him decide to leave the farm for good; for had it been spring, he might have longed for the country. Still, it wasn't a hard decision to make; Willie was a farmer's son, but hardly a farmer himself. "The stupid bastard," his father used to say, "he does everything like a damn Polack." So when Bessie scrambled up his insides, Willie wondered if God were warning him—once coming from the field at night he had been set upon by three or four wild dogs, another time he was trapped digging a well, and just last year Polford's bull, brought for the cows, pinned him to the fence like an insect before they could beat it away—and in his agony Willie made a vow with God that he would never go near a farm again, if he might live. He returned once more, however, the next spring when he was lucky enough to sell the farm. Everything went, furniture, implements . . . Bessie.

"Will she pull?"

"She's a bear."

"Nice care—I can see that."

"My best, sir," Willie said, and he pulled himself straighter on his cane, full of dignity, still offended with Bessie.

"I think you've made yourself a deal," the man said. At that Willie's lip trembled and he said, "She'll treat you as handsome as handsome does."

"I mean the farm," the man said. "Everything." Willie appeared

confused and reached impulsively for his wife's arm. The man picked up some dirt and let it slip through his fingers. When he saw them watching him, he threw the dirt down and rubbed his hands on his trousers.

There was enough to keep them for a while. Willie couldn't work yet, but his wife found a job in a bakery, making dainties. She was good at that. They were rather content; in the evenings they often went to the movies and Willie began to read. He bought a subscription to the *Reader's Digest;* the pithy sayings especially appealed to him. And he discovered poetry. "Who would've ever thought I had such stuff in me?" he said to his wife after reading a poem. "And I like it," he declared, and he went into the bathroom, closed the door, and studied his face in the mirror for a long time. Many poems he knew quite through, "Flanders Field" and "Trees," which he would recite for friends over a bottle of beer. There was no way to stop him, he had a superb voice. When he said, "Poems are made by fools like me," his friends snickered in spite of themselves and fooled with their beer bottles. "It ain't nothing he does that you can see. It's his damned face."

Willie liked the people he met in the city, he liked people about him, he joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And his wife took membership in the Auxiliary. It was natural enough that they should join such an organization, for they had both suffered from the war. When Willie reached the front lines in October, 1918, his path was crossed by a bullet that shot him through the groin. He fell in a hump, but rose instantly, the blood streaming through his crossed hands. He tried to smile, foolishly, but his eyes expressed terrible anguish. "Well, there go the family jewels," he said, and he fell unconscious to the ground.

When Willie was well enough to be about, the war was over. He and some other soldiers at the hospital received passes to go into Paris. At a little bistro in Montmartre they met the barmaid Genevieve. She was pretty and petite, quite French-looking, they thought, and therefore desirable. Actually she was Belgian; she had lost her home early in the war, then her father and mother, and had come to Paris. Her face was square and rather gaunt, with high cheek bones. Several strands of premature grey appeared in her naturally curly hair, and her eyes were light blue. They were dreamy and melancholy. Altogether she expressed woeful feminine sadness—as though her misery were too apparent to be all her own but rather a

friendly mask of sympathy for the soldiers, which made them itch to possess her. They did for a price and came away nonplussed. "Well, she's French all right, 'cause that's all she talked, even when I pinched her, but boy she ain't no more limber than a board, is she?" Willie ignored them; this was his first, even though he was last, and his best. He came back all the nights of his pass. When he paused for rest, after the early thrills, he became alarmed at the girl's chronic, even sorrow. He intuitively felt a need to talk down that abjectness, lest the light go out of his pleasure, perhaps never to return. "Tell me," he said in the full power of his voice, "how did a girl like you get in this awful business?" as though the expression were being uttered for the first time. She was combing her hair—that gesture. *"Comment—comment—"* he tried again, leaning toward her. Something he did made her whimper, at the corners of her eyes two sparkling tears. He went to her and put his arms around her. "Ah, my little petite," he said, feeling his manhood rage through him. Tears were running pell-mell when she lifted her face. Mandibly they clutched and fell on the bed. Genevieve became his wife, and he married her in that very country.

On the farms along Merrifield Pike, Genevieve seemed destined for scandal. "No, that's what I say, 'A real French woman from Paris.' I suppose she'll have all the boys lathering at Fox's gate like bulls. Why, an American woman won't be able to step outside the house."

"You mean she sure enough is Willie's wife?"

They went to see her. For a month of Sundays they stormed Fox's place, eating his food, dirtying up the parlor, and clapping Willie on the back, till even he could hardly smile any more. They brought her in from the kitchen for each round of visitors. "Why, she's sort of old, you know. And such a poor mournful-looking creature that I could hardly keep from laughing." The men, smiling their disappointment, withdrew as quickly as they could and went out and sat on the fence, where they told horrendously dirty stories. But a couple of hardy boys, who had remembered what their parents said at home, tried to touch her, and they were cuffed out the door. At last they went away, suddenly old and irritable, and were hard on their horses all the way home.

Genevieve and Willie had time then, to begin to know one another, and to enter into the life of the farm. A room had been furnished for them up under the eaves where they went at the blind scrabbling busi-

ness of making love as man and wife. Willie was perplexed. It was a pity how simple she was, rather like a secret box into which he could stuff his lust night after night—and as unresponsive. Willie thought of lighted Paris and the things soldiers had told him; he whispered in her ear. "Ah, you want me to be *comme ces bêtes,*" she said, and for two nights she slept on a chair and wouldn't come near him. The second day he turned away from wrath and pulled the warm blankets from his mouth in order to speak. "Genevieve, this just doesn't seem right." The red morning light made him seem as rosy as a baby, and seeing the child's look of anguish on his face, she went over and got in bed with him so that he might be comforted.

On the farm Genevieve was a willing helpmeet. She milked the cows, she gathered kindling, she was underfoot in the kitchen. It was apparent to Mr. and Mrs. Fox that Genevieve hadn't brought their son up in the world one bit. "They're like one cripple leading another," Mr. Fox said.

"You'd think they were brother and sister," his wife said, astonishing herself. They viewed the young couple with alarm, and Mr. Fox set himself up as a stern lord to both of them.

Though Mr. Fox presently changed. Occasionally he helped Genevieve with tasks she couldn't master; he laughingly mocked her attempts at English and would pat her on the bottom when she came in from out of doors. His wife had fallen ill. She had always had respiratory trouble and a catarrh which sometimes made her breath unbearable. Now she was probably dying of tuberculosis.

One spring day she was seriously ill. Mr. Fox sat in their room by her bed, smelling the fetid air and looking at the sun outside. A robin came to build a nest on one of the crude cross-beams under the eaves. "There ain't no room there," Mr. Fox said aloud. But the crazy robin returned, bringing twigs and grass and laid them on the beam. Many of the twigs fell, and she knocked others off with her feet and wings when she tried to build. She came back again and again till finally her mate arrived, scolding and dancing about. He tried to push her off the beam, till they both fell and flew away. Mr. Fox rose. "By God, there's only one thing a French woman's good for," and he charged from the room. He found her in the kitchen and went straight about his business; she called for Willie. Willie, who had been working in the barn, arrived with a shovel still in his hand, and saw his father trying to drag Genevieve out from behind the kitchen stove. He hit him on the back. Mr. Fox

lifted himself, trembling, looking at odd corners of the room; but catching hold of dignity he said, "I'm your father, do you realize that?" Which took Willie back, and Mr. Fox sidled out the door.

Mr. Fox died soon after that, of a stroke, while beating a horse on the head. The news shocked his wife into a coma, but after having withdrawn from the world for a few days, she began to recover and was soon able to come out and sit on the back porch, in the sunshine. Much to Willie's relief, his mother took over the direction of the farm and, still sitting on the porch, she guided their operations the summer long. That winter she brought her husband's easy chair out into the kitchen by the range. She had a notebook and a pencil with her, and from time to time would scribble something. "There, you see," she said.

Willie said, "I don't know what I'd do without you, Mother." Her eyes were as bright and searching as bugs. Willie wondered if he could tell his mother about Genevieve—that she didn't seem to be all he had expected. Late one afternoon in February, when Genevieve was out milking the cows, he went to his mother; but, lo, she was dead, a twisted smile on her face. The farm had fallen to Willie. "Mother," he said in utter humility.

Johnny the fat man came into the bar. He was pulling at his pants. "Boy, this heat gets me down," he said. Willie put a cocktail shaker on the bar, then two bottles of beer and a jigger of whiskey. Johnny mixed them into the shaker and finished the drink in two long draughts. "I don't seem to have any room for my balls," he said. Willie got out two more bottles of beer. Johnny watched him pour the whiskey. "Every time I walk down the street I feel like I'm wrestling with somebody." This time he took a little longer with the drink. "Did you hear about that new beer distributor?"

"That Smith fellow?" Willie said.

"Yeah, Smith—seems like his name ought to be Schultz or something, don't it?" Johnny finished the drink.

"Did he die?" Willie said.

"Die—no—he's giving a stag party. Didn't you hear about it?" Willie crossed his arms and looked angry. "Nope," he said defensively.

"OK, OK, it wasn't in the papers, you know. It's for the taverns and their employees. Men. I'd go if I were you."

Willie wiped down the bar. "Free beer and food, eh?"

"And women, they tell me. Nu-ude women. Be quiet—mum's the

word, as they say." Willie picked up Johnny's cocktail shaker and wiped under it. He washed the whiskey glass and held it up to the light. "Ain't you going?" he said belligerently.

"Me, I ain't no employee. I wouldn't risk it in the summertime anyway, I'm too fat." Johnny paid for a sack of peanuts and left.

Genevieve would worry if Willie went to the stag party. They had never been very far apart. From the first days on the farm they had huddled together, instinctively, as animals do. It was not to be supposed that they liked one another or were even curious after the first few months, but against the world, they were inseparable. One time they went to a party. Everyone was young, they had applejack and some whiskey, and they played a lot of rough-and-tumble games like kids. Post office was suggested. Willie took delight in the thought of kissing another woman. The girls were outside the door and the men in. A postman stood by the door to announce the mail. "Your turn, Willie," he said. Willie went to the door and the postman opened it. Genevieve. Everyone almost died, and Genevieve and Willie stood staring at one another for the longest time, as before a mirror. At the same moment they folded in each other's arms, and fighting back their tears they gently patted one another's backs. It grew awfully quiet in the room, and the men got out the whiskey.

After Willie's parents had died, he and Genevieve went to see a doctor. They had been married four years and didn't have a child. "There's not a thing wrong with either of you," the doctor said.

"In the war I was shot down there," Willie said. "I got a Purple Heart, and I thought—"

"Nope. Nothing to it. You'll be all right. Just keep it up."

"In the same old way?"

"Why—yes," the doctor said.

That winter Genevieve became pregnant. At the top of the landing she felt dizzy. She fell downstairs and broke her arm and miscarried. She had to lie in bed to mend. When the doctor had gone, Willie broke into the bedroom, his face contorted with anger. "I just don't know what to say," he yelled. "Sometimes I get scared, dammit." She choked crying and turned toward the wall. They had no children. Afterwards, when the comrades talked about the soldiers who died, Willie went them one better. "I didn't give my life," he said. "I gave my children's lives. My children's lives." He had to repeat it. "In the war I was shot down there. I got a

Purple Heart and it did something to me." The comrades showed their respect.

"You understand that I don't have anything to complain about. I'm not grudging life. There's still me and Genevieve."

When Willie took the bartender's job, Genevieve quit work at the bakery and took her place in the home. "I'll take care of you, Curlylocks," Willie said. "You sit at home on a cushion and sew a fine seam, like a woman should."

But she was lonely without him. The neighbor women depressed her; they were always so excited, and the way they talked about their poor husbands made her blush. Willie never did any of those things—she longed for him. Late in the evenings now, when the bar was about to close, she went down to the club to wait for Willie and to walk home with him. She felt keenly his disapproval of her presence, but pretended not to notice. Sometimes on Friday or Saturday, after a busy night, she tried to help him put fresh bottles of beer into the depleted iceboxes. "Now, stop it," he said, scolding in a low tone. "Go away."

"You're awful tired, Willie. I'll just stay and help." The rest of the employees, watching them wrestle with the beer cartons, went about their work with serious faces. "God," they laughed when the Foxes had left, "they're like one cripple helping another."

When they got home Willie said, "If you do that one more time, I'll never go to work again. We'll starve like rats. I'll show you." Genevieve had never heard him talk such violence. He seemed so independent since he took the new job. She was afraid, she began to mother him. If it rained after Willie had gone to work, she ran down to the club with rubbers and an umbrella; in the winter she lugged his galoshes and an extra sweater for him. In hot weather there were always his salt pills which he had forgotten. Willie put on weight, and lolled in bed on Sunday mornings. He thought maybe he had heart trouble, and his kidneys didn't seem the same on both sides. Once it was necessary to take two weeks off from work in order to have his hemorrhoids removed. "Aw, it was nice," he told the comrades. "Genevieve was a wife and a nurse all rolled into one. I couldn't have done better in a hospital." Then one day Genevieve slipped on the ice and broke her arm for the second time. The ladies of the Auxiliary thought it was simply amazing how concerned Willie was. "Why, I hear he turned as white as a sheet when he heard the news, and ran straight home," they told their husbands.

"I thought, gosh, I wish all men were like that." Sitting by her bed, Willie leaned back and smiled indulgently up at the ceiling. Genevieve was all right, she was sleeping. She stirred. "There, there, Genevieve, you're OK. Now don't cry. I'm not angry with you."

"Do you like me, Willie?"

"Why yes, you know. Like I read in a poem once, you and I are one."

Through the years their lives had settled down to give and take. The most they asked for was mutual kindness, and they had become zealous for each other's welfare. Genevieve waited one night for Willie to come home from work. The bar had closed, he should be along any minute now. Out in the street Genevieve heard people, boys, calling harshly and laughing. They were abusing someone. "Willie!" she thought and ran outside. At a safe distance the boys had Willie surrounded, and they were pretending to laugh as if their sides would burst. Frightened, Willie saw Genevieve and seemed to fall back against her. "Genevieve, what's the matter, what's the matter?"

"Willie, come inside."

"They're crazy, Genevieve. They're crazy."

"Oh, come away, dear," and she pulled him into the house.

"I'll get the cops," Willie said.

"Oh, darling, it's your apron." The night had been a busy one, and Willie had put his overcoat on over his apron and walked home. She took it off and threw it on the floor. Then they sought each other's arms. Their hearts grew quiet at last, the world was outside.

Willie never forgot that incident. Whenever he wanted to intensify a particular affront, he could call it up at will, sucking at it like a sore tooth. He looked around at the persons in the club—Jasper Williams abusing the slot machines and cursing, Billy Hokes the waiter and Jonesy, Connie the Sailor and Roy Hayes arguing over their beer—probably every last one of them knew about the party and hadn't told him. Willie was furious; he thought of other insults, real and fancied. Many years ago they had elected him chaplain of the Post, and then the next year and the next till finally it became automatic, and he was given the office each year without even a preliminary nomination. They told him it was because he had such a wonderful voice, and a flair for words; and sometimes when he spoke about a recently deceased comrade, their hair bristled on their

necks. When they elected him each term, they rose, smiling, and gave him an ovation, but out of the corner of his eye Willie saw them belabor each other with their elbows. And those damned Auxiliary women. They had told Willie how much they liked his wife's hair, that they just loved to look at it. Genevieve's hair had turned completely grey, silver in appearance, but it still retained its natural curl. She had it done up in ringlets so that she would only have to run her comb through it in the morning; life was easier that way. Willie knew that the women lied. They were as appalled as he was and only spoke because they just had to say something. He knew what poor Genevieve looked like, she looked like ornamented death. Willie grabbed for a rag and wiped down the bar. Harold the manager came in; Willie met him in the middle of the floor. "Why didn't you tell me about that damned stag party?" he said.

"Well, Willie—"

"I'm just as responsible as you are."

"Now, listen, Willie—" Willie left him and went behind the bar. "You—Jasper Williams—get away from those slot machines," he announced like a trumpet. They turned. Willie dervished and found the cash register. He turned back, smiling, and his eyes refused to meet them out of contempt.

The party was held one Sunday evening. They hadn't wanted to profane the Sabbath, but Sunday was the only day on which the bars were closed. "Oh, comrades," Willie said. "It's good to be here with you. The air is so gentle."

They were assembled on an abandoned farm, located by a small lake. A chateau was at their disposal, perched on the bank above the water. On the second floor of the chateau a little stage had been built. Some of the fellows had been out earlier in the week to make it. They did it gratis. Outside there was food, and cooks to serve it. Ham and beef, pork, Canadian bacon, fish and venison. Barbecues, hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad and baked beans. There was even celery. "Try some of that venison," they said; the sauce ran down their chins. And beer. All the brands that Smithy the distributor handled were iced away in a series of large beer tubs which resembled horse troughs. Each tub of beer had its trademark and an advertisement tacked on a scaffolding behind it. At their pleasure the men could select their favorite brands. "Now stick with me," Harold said.

"Horsefeathers," Willie said and drank his beer.

As the sun went down, the games of chance came out. Food was cleared off the tables and a craps board laid; the wheel of fortune went up, card parties were starting, and for Smithy the distributor and a few, roulette.

"God, look at them with their money," Harold said. "And some of them don't have a piss pot nor a lid to keep it holy."

"It's astonishing," Willie said. They found a friendly game of craps. "Come on in," Billy Hokes said. "This is for family men." Willie dug in his pockets for change.

"What's that?" Harold said. Among the coins in Willie's hands were some pills. "Salt pills," Willie said. "Genevieve thought I better bring some." They laughed. Willie smiled and put one in his mouth and drank it down with beer.

"Atta boy," they said and clapped him on the back.

Willie won over two dollars the first time he had his hands on the dice. He went for more beer. When he had the dice once more, he doubled up on snake eyes and won again. Harold offered him a cigar, and Willie blew smoke through his nose. There was a scuffle nearby. A young man, marvelously muscled and nude to the waist, jumped on a table. He waved a quart of whiskey. "I can lick any man here," he said, "and I'll drink whiskey if I want to." Then he stepped backwards and lay moaning on the ground with a broken collar bone. "Say, that's that Haines boy," Harold said. "You'd better drive him into town, Willie."

"I don't have a car, what's the matter with you?"

"I'll lend you mine."

"Nope," Willie said, wiping off the mouth of a beer bottle.

"Didn't we all fight in the wars together?" Willie drank his beer and looked at Harold askance. They laid the Haines boy in the back of a panel truck and drove off. "Damn fools," Willie said.

Willie kept winning; he counted off ten dollars, put it away in his wallet, and finished another bottle of beer. A hush fell over the players. Harold stood up. "What's that?"

"A big truck."

"I know it's a big truck," Harold said annoyed. "And what's more they're delivering a piano at the house."

"Well, don't get hostile."

"Why didn't they deliver it in the daytime, that's what I want to know," Harold said. They stood up to watch the unloading of the piano. "She shall have music wherever she goes," Willie said.

Billy Hokes picked up his money and left. "Where you going?" Harold said.

"I think I'll go on up to the house and wait," Billy said.

"Billy's a widower," Willie said. They returned to the game. Occasionally they had to shout to make themselves heard because that bartender from the Shangri-La Tavern kept walking back and forth among the tables screaming. Three fellows got him and took him down and threw him in the lake. The ensuing silence made them jittery. Harold stood up, and then the others. "Oh—it's nothing, I guess," Harold said, and they knelt down once more. But a minute later Harold was up again. "What's that?"

"A big black sedan."

"Dammit, I know it," Harold said. Some women got out of the car and ran into the house like celebrities. The men threw a few more dice, but shortly in groups of two and three they picked up their money and strolled toward the house. They talked of automobiles, hunting, and the New York Yankees, leaving at the tables only those who were winning and the men who were desperately losing.

Inside the house it was terribly hot and the smoke made the eyes burn. Willie took another salt pill. "Well, now's the time," Harold said; "I always believe in going whole hog at these things," and he pulled a bottle of whiskey from his pocket. He offered Willie some. A man climbed on the stage and began poking at the piano, and a fiddle player joined him. The men fell silent. The musicians faltered into "Sweet Georgia Brown," and the first girl came out. "Thank God she's young," Harold said. Willie was astonished. He had seen pictures of girls before but this one was real. Her flanks were so trim and white, and her breasts. The girl finished her act and the men applauded and called for more. "More!" Willie bellowed and the men looked at him. He grabbed Harold's whiskey and took a long drink. Two more girls came out and went through a routine much like the first. When they had finished, the applause was unanimous. The men were roughhousing; they loosened their ties and called for beer, and here and there some of the old fellows like Harold and Willie had wormed closer to the stage. The musicians bounced into a jazz number, and the first girl reappeared. Obviously this was different, she meant business. Billy Hokes stood up on a chair. She capered and gamboled and finished in a sweat. The next girl came out like a comet.. "Look what she's doing," Harold said. With one leap Willie sprang up on Billy's chair and

knocked Billy among the crowd. That would have meant a fight except that in the melee Willie fell too, and Billy didn't know who pushed him. Picking himself up from the floor Willie realized what it was that had been bothering him for the last hour or two. He had lost the tie-clasp which Genevieve had given him for Christmas. But he wasn't sure yet; he would look in his pocket later. When the third girl finished, the men were knocking each other around, and several fights nearly started. Someone stood on a chair, waving a bottle. "God bless you, Mr. Smith. I've never had such a good time." He fainted. Mr. Smith accepted the tribute smiling, and one of his friends pushed his hat down over his eyes.

The little band rested, but the men couldn't stand it. They broke into yells and staccato clapping. At an invisible cue, the piano player beat down on his instrument, and the three women, nude, came out in a group. They danced and were bold together. Willie was right by the stage; he couldn't look at them for guilt. He put his hands over his ears, unconsciously hearing the crescendo of sound each time he released his fingers. Genevieve in France, he thought; he grabbed for Harold's bottle.

They were proposing something special on the stage. "Here's your man," Harold said. "Give an old man a chance."

"Aw, now," Willie said, but he felt himself lifted bodily onto the stage.

"Now, let's be sensible," Willie said, turning around and preparing to go down, but the girls were encouraging him. They were beside him warm and golden in the naked light. He could touch them. They were dragging him toward the center of the stage and pulling at his clothes. "Don't," he said, slapping at them. One stood directly before his eyes, and Willie felt annihilating lust flood up from somewhere in his loins. He wanted to speak something tender. "Oh, young ladies," he said. They were all around him, interring him with their foreign smell. He reached out, he wanted to hold her young body before everyone—

Blood was coming out of Willie's nose. It had covered his chin and was spreading on his shirt front.

"Oh Genevieve," Willie said. The men began to mutter. Willie dropped to his knees and lowered his head. Blood dripped onto his trousers. "Our Father, who art in Heaven," he began. One of the girls cried out. She was hitting Willie on the shoulders and head. "Make him stop. Help me. Stop the damn fool."

MASON JORDAN MASON:

Consummatum est

Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem
thou crown of creation
thou jeweled crown

And if I owned a mad dog
ugly as you are
I would name him

Shamen

And shave his ass
with a broken mirror
and paint it with turpentine

And train him to walk backwards

Whizzbone the Warbleloot

Handsome walking the platform
so mighty
with a tail
like a slender yellow gal

Whizzbone whizzbone
warbleloot so mighty
walking that platform
like a high yellow gal

Like spats
like cane
like a high hat and all
but them old eyelids
drooped like a debauched turtle's

Sing 'em low warbleloot
tap 'em loose
to a highboot cane

Tap 'em warbleloot
to a highbone shinny
make that platform walk around too
like he had spats
and striped garters
walk around
like he was sporting it too
to a highboot
highboot cane

The Mother of Hamos

In the theological seminary
I read by accident
some books reserved
only for Doctors of Divinity

It shake my faith less
than some things

The cathedrals in New Orleans
filled up with crockery
which give me the creeps
with all the glass eyes hanging

And all the little signs
THANK YOU
THANK YOU SO MUCH

And the saints sitting up
in heaven with nothing to do

He could at least learn
to play a zither

but only the angels
have to work like that

Providing of course
these books
know what they make out like

FLORA J. ARNSTEIN:

Gulls

Ducks in their trundle,
Swans in their dream, slow-wheeling,
And the provincial mud-hen—
Patterns of accessible bird.

But the gull of the quirked beak
And pirate stilt—
Violent of wing and partisan of sea
Is feather-kin to none.

The thwart adequacy of land,
The arc, lonely in the turn—
Through the palmed tail the sun
Tracing structure, tracing relevance . . .

From whatever angle the gulls
Prompting headlands,
The agreement of wave,
The sea, positive in kelp,
The salt dry and the spume yet spindled—
The gull speaks these out of braked throat.

Best on spars, spiral to sky,
Or counter to wind,
A ravenous path, chipped reversal,
And oiled landing on any quarried sea.

MARK SPILKA:

Was D. H. Lawrence a Symbolist?

In recent studies on D. H. Lawrence, two veteran critics have tried to align him with the *correspondance* tradition established by Baudelaire.[1] They have called him a symbolist out of the reasonable belief that *symbolisme* means the use of private images to suggest or evoke the ineffable. But the question soon arises—which ineffable? There happen to be two, at least in philosophical and religious circles, and Lawrence himself was always conscious of the fact. Thus, in *Twilight in Italy* he speaks of the twofold Infinite: "the Father and the Son, the Dark and the Light, the Senses and the Mind, the Soul and the Spirit, the self and the not-self. . . . The consummation of man is twofold, in the Self and in Selflessness. . . . And man must know both." Now *symbolisme* implies a wholly different metaphysic than this, since most or perhaps all of its adherents are searching for the spiritual infinite. It seems wrong, therefore, to speak too readily about Lawrence, the symbolist, or even to be led astray by the suggestive nature of his language, or by the use in his novels of dominant symbols like the *symbole littéraire*. As Mark Schorer has pointed out, Lawrence is essentially a ritualist; his symbols function through the larger pattern of the ritual, and, as I hope to show in this essay, they also function at a different level of language, and for different ends, than the *symbole littéraire*.

To grasp the problem clearly, we must turn, for a moment, to an extremely pertinent theory of language, myth, and religion put forth by Ernst Cassirer. As the German philosopher explains it:

> Language moves in the middle kingdom between the 'indefinite' and the 'infinite'; it transforms the indeterminate into a determinate idea, and then holds it within the sphere of finite determinations. So there are, in the realm of mythic and religious conception, 'ineffables' of different order, one of which represents the lower limit of verbal expression, the other the upper limit; but between these bounds, which are drawn by the very nature of verbal expression, language can move with perfect freedom, and exhibit all the wealth and concrete exemplification of its creative power.

For Cassirer, then, the religious symbol operates at the upper level of language; in metaphorical terms, it reaches out, encircles some

aery corner of the spiritual infinite, then pulls it down within the middle kingdom and holds it there within its determinate form. And the *symbole littéraire* (or the pure poem itself, as conceived by Mallarmé) performs essentially the same function. But at the lower level of language the problem is altogether different. Speaking again in metaphorical terms, when the mythic symbol reaches out, it encounters *mana,*[2] that vague, mysterious, holy power which pops up out of a mythical field of force and appears now here, now there, in any guise, in front of primitive man. Unlike the spiritual infinite, which is static, absolute and eternal, *mana* is a highly relative and kinetic force which occurs in time. Hence the mythic symbol can only focus our attention, at best, upon the ebb and flow of this relative force, while the religious symbol, or the *symbole littéraire,* can theoretically hold or fix the spiritual infinite within a timeless moment. And neither symbol can perform the other's function.

In the light of these arguments, the distance between Lawrence and the symbolists becomes enormous: for Baudelaire and his followers, Nature was a mere "forest of symbols," an outward front for the spiritual infinite; but Lawrence found the force of life itself in Nature, and he made a close connection between that force and the *mana* concept. He utilized that concept, for example, in novels like *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love,* where the moon sometimes becomes a sudden "presence" to his protagonists; and he wrote about it directly in *Apocalypse,* where he deals specifically with the old Greek version of *mana,* the *theos* concept:

> To the ancient consciousness . . . the universe was a great complex activity of things existing and moving and having effect. . . . Everything was *theos;* but even so, not at the same moment. At the moment, whatever struck you was god. If it was a pool of water, the very watery pool might strike you: then that was god; or a faint vapour at evening rising might catch the imagination: then that was *theos;* or thirst might overcome you at the sight of the water: then the thirst itself was god; or you drank, and the delicious and indescribable slaking of thirst was the god; or you felt the sudden chill of the water as you touched it: and then another god came into being, "the cold": and this was not a quality, it was an existing entity, almost a creature, certainly a *theos.*

The difficulty which Lawrence has in describing *theos* is not his own: for primitive man, *theos* (or *mana*) was too vague and impermanent for precise description; hence he used the term as noun, verb, adjective, or adverb with equal readiness. This helps to account, inci-

dentally, for much of the well-known "carelessness" in Lawrence's writing. The symbolists can afford to be precise in their poems: their version of the infinite is fixed and static, waiting for the proper language to encase it. But *mana* demands a much more volatile medium, not to encase it, but simply to keep pace with it and to keep it in focus. So it seems unfair to isolate a nebulous passage by Lawrence, as some critics have done, and to compare it unfavorably with a more precise example of symbolist art. For the truth is that Lawrence actually fused the *mana* concept with this own particular view of "quickness" in both life and language. We see this, unmistakably, in a passage from an essay called "The Novel":

> We have to choose between the quick and the dead. The quick is God-flame, in everything. And the dead is dead. In this room where I write, there is a little table that is dead: it doesn't even weakly exist. And there is a ridiculous little iron stove, which for some unknown reason is quick. And there is an iron wardrobe trunk, which for some still more mysterious reason is quick. And there are several books, whose mere corpus is dead, utterly dead and non-existent. And there is a sleeping cat, very quick. And a glass lamp, that, alas, is dead.
>
> What makes the difference? *Quién sabe?* But difference there is. And I *know* it.
>
> And the sum and source of all quickness, we will call God. And the sum and total of all deadness we may call human.
>
> And if one tries to find out wherein the quickness of the quick lies, it is in a certain weird relationship between that which is quick and—I don't know; perhaps all the rest of things. It seems to consist in an odd sort of fluid, changing, grotesque, or beautiful relatedness. That silly iron stove somehow *belongs.* Whereas this thin-shanked table doesn't belong. It is a mere disconnected lump, like a cut-off finger.
>
> And now we see the great, great merits of the novel. It can't exist without being "quick." . . . For the relatedness and interrelatedness of all things flows and changes and trembles like a stream, and like fish in the stream the characters in the novel swim and drift and float and turn belly-up when they're dead.

All this is close, in a modified and intelligent way, to the *mana* concept; and we might even note, in passing, the equally close connection Lawrence makes between life and the novel, in terms of organic flow. But for the moment the important points to stress are these: (1) that Lawrence had found corroboration for his independent sense of the quickness, the interrelatedness of all things, by reading the anthropologists—not Baudelaire; and (2) that he seems to have

borrowed the holiness and perhaps the volatility of *mana* and merged this with his own concept of the life-flame, to arrive—not at synaesthesia—but at the God-stuff, or the life-force, which flows through all "live" objects and binds man to the living universe. We can see this force at work, very clearly, in a lengthy excerpt from the opening pages of *The Rainbow:*

> So the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money. . . . They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and interrelations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will. . . .
>
> It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generation and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round.

Lawrence is decidedly moving about, in this passage, at the lower level of language; he is dealing with a vague but nourishing force or flow which occurs *in time,*[3] and which plays an important and distinctly religious role in the novel: the Brangwen men enjoy "blood-intimacy" with the life around them; they must learn to utilize this contact for creative ends; and in order to achieve organic being, they

must also learn to transcend it. But opposed to the "rainbow," or the round arch of full organic life, is the pointed arch of the cathedral, the symbol of Christianity. And to treat Christianity properly, Lawrence had to shift over to the upper level of language and deal in terms of "soul-intimacy" with the Christian infinite, during the *timeless* moment of prayer: which is precisely what happens, midway through the novel, when Will Brangwen enters Lincoln Cathedral.

> Then he pushed open the door, and the great, pillared gloom was before him, in which his soul shuddered and rose from her nest. . . . His soul leapt up into the gloom, into possession, it reeled, it swooned with a great escape, it quivered in the womb, in the hush and the gloom of fecundity, like seed of procreation in ecstasy. . . .
>
> Away from time, always outside of time! Between east and west, between dawn and sunset, the church lay like a seed in silence, dark before germination, silenced after death. Containing birth and death, potential with all the noise and transitation of life, the cathedral remained hushed, a great involved seed, whereof the flower would be radiant life inconceivable, but whose beginning and whose end were the circle of silence. Spanned round with the rainbow, the jewelled gloom folded music upon silence, light upon darkness, fecundity upon death, as a seed folds leaf upon leaf and silence upon the root and the flower, hushing up the secret of all between its parts, the death out of which it fell, the life into which it has dropped, the immortality it involves, and the death it will embrace again.
>
> Here in the church, "before" and "after" were folded together, all was contained in oneness. . . .

If we compare this with the previous passage in aim, texture, and execution, we can see at once that Lawrence worked at opposite levels of language, and with two distinct concepts of the ineffable. That he could do so successfully is not simply an indication of versatility, but a confirmation of the actual religious dimension of his writings. We find this same striking contrast in still other works: in *Sons and Lovers* there is the close, heavy, timeless spiritual communion over flowers between Paul Morel and Miriam Leivers, and there is the bright, open, sensual engagement with the natural world which Paul and his mother enjoy; in "The Man Who Died" there is the dramatic contrast between the cold, timeless nullity of the tomb and the bloom of life in the peasant's yard:

> The man who had died looked nakedly on life, and saw a vast resoluteness everywhere flinging itself up in stormy or subtle wave-crests, foam-tips emerging out of the blue invisible, a black and orange cock or the green flame-tongues out of the extremes of the fig-tree. They came forth, these things and creatures of the spring,

> glowing with desire and with assertion. They came like crests of foam, out of the blue flood of the invisible desire, out of the vast invisible sea of strength, and they came coloured and tangible, evanescent, yet deathless in their coming.

Even the young gamecock is a crest on "the swaying ocean of life," and we see, perhaps for the first time, that the quickness and spontaneity of Lawrence's prose—its transcendent quality—is almost always "supplied" by the primitive indefinite, the life-force, and not, as some writers have suggested, by either the Christian or the symbolist version of the infinite.[4]

II

But the distance between Lawrence and the symbolists is more than a matter of language and metaphysics. There is also the problem of "the self and the not-self" to contend with. In their search for the spiritual absolute, for example, the symbolists lead us away from life toward realms of non-being. One thinks of Mallarmé, who sat before a mirror while writing his poems—not out of vanity, but to prevent his disappearance into nothingness; or of Valéry's preoccupation with suicide, and of the positive value which he placed upon non-being. What is at stake here, then, is the whole symbolist effort to "transcend man." Their version of the infinite occurs outside of *life* as well as time, since life is merely finite. So by definition, the symbolist poem is an organization of sensory material for static, timeless, and essentially non-human (or non-finite) ends. Of course, the final product may "transfigure life," but the structure of the poem remains unaltered.

On the other hand, Lawrence saw the life-force as the source of all vitality, and accordingly he found a central and significant role for "his" ineffable in daily life, in time, in basic human experience. Thus the chief emphasis, throughout his work, is on greater fullness of being, through love, friendship, and creative labor—through situations, in other words, which involve some vital form of communion between man and man, or even between man and the living universe. In the short story "Sun," for instance, a woman moves from the sterile touch of her husband to life-giving contact with the sun. This contact is organic and dramatic, but only in a focal sense, symbolic. Through daily rites with the sun, new powers of consciousness are aroused within the woman's body. She becomes a fuller person through these rites: and this is the pattern—resurrection through ritual—which Lawrence follows in most of his works.

Or destruction through ritual, the other side of the coin. And for

this, take the chapter called "Rabbit" in *Women in Love,* where Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen attempt to subdue the stubborn rabbit, Bismarck, the squirming bundle of life which young Winifred Crich values as *un mystère, ein Wunder.* But each of them is badly scratched in the process, and as the rabbit bursts wildly around a small enclosed yard, they mock it, they show each other the deep scars on their arms, and smile obscenely, as initiates to the "abhorrent mysteries" which will surely follow. This is their bond or pledge, then, their ritual initiation to the violent ripping at each other's souls which will end in Gerald's death. Only the child Winifred sees the rabbit as magnificently alive: "Let its mother stroke its fur then, darling, because it is so mysterious," she says as the chapter ends.

Now the whole interplay between Gerald, Gudrun, and the rabbit is direct and vivid, and relative to a particular stage in the novel. As a symbol, the rabbit simply holds that stage in focus, but as a living animal he participates in the rite between Gudrun and Gerald. This is not, in other words, a vague, suggestive, static moment—a *symbole littéraire*—but a definite and spontaneous pledge between two future lovers to destroy the life within themselves, to deny or exploit the life-flame itself, the mystery and wonder embodied by the rabbit.

> "Isn't it a *fool!* [cried Gudrun]. Isn't it a sickening *fool?"* The vindictive mockery in her voice made [Gerald's] brain quiver. Glancing up at him, into his eyes, she revealed again the mocking, white-cruel recognition. There was a league between them, abhorrent to them both. They were implicated with each other in abhorrent mysteries.
>
> "How many scratches have you?" he asked, showing his hard forearm, white and hard and torn in red gashes.
>
> "How really vile!" she cried, flushing with a sinister vision. "Mine is nothing."
>
> She lifted her arm and showed a deep red score down the silken white flesh.
>
> "What a devil!" he exclaimed. But it was as if he had had knowledge of her in the long red rent of her forearm, so silken and soft. He did not want to touch her. He would have to make himself touch her, deliberately. The long, shallow red rip seemed torn across his own brain, tearing the surface of his ultimate consciousness, letting through the forever unconscious, unthinkable red ether of the beyond, the obscene beyond.

Such ritual scenes occur as early, in Lawrence's work, as *Sons and Lovers,* where the living relationship between men, women, and flowers is used to push the story along: take Mrs. Morel's garden-swoon, for example, before Paul's birth; or the whole attempt by

Paul and Miriam to commune over flowers, *à la* Wordsworth; or the extraordinary flower-picking scene between Paul, Miriam, and Clara; the floral benediction as Paul and Clara make love; and finally, the spontaneous gift of flowers to Miriam at the novel's end. But there is no space here to explicate such complicated patterns. For the moment I simply want to emphasize that most of Lawrence's works move forward through ritual scenes, toward ritualistic ends. For just as the essence of religious ritual is communion, so Lawrence saw all deeply significant contacts—between human beings, or even between man and the living universe—as spontaneous forms of communion, either sacred or debased, either nourishing or reductive; and just as the old primitive "rites of passage" always centered upon such basic events as birth, rebirth into manhood, death, and resurrection to the greater life beyond, so Lawrence's stories always center upon "rebirth" and "death"—the emergence into greater or lesser forms of being. But therefore the sexual scenes in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can only be understood as "dramatic" rites of communion. And even the famous moon scenes, in both *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow,* can only be understood in terms of actual rapport, pro and con, between the protagonists and the moon-as-living-force: these men and women participate, that is to say, in ritualistic situations which fall within the larger flow of the novels. And so, as the novels move along, these figures rise up toward organic being, as certain statues of Rodin rise up out of a raw rough marble base—still rooted in the vague unknown, but nonetheless organic in themselves.

III

If this line of argument proves correct, then Lawrence scarcely qualifies as a symbolist; if anything, he stands opposed to this tradition on metaphysical and ontological grounds. But there is still another category to consider: the realm of "pure aesthetics." It is true, for example, that some of the later poets did not pursue the infinite; they concerned themselves with formal or aesthetic matters, to the point where symbolism became a mere question of technique. Yet even these disciples aimed at static and gratuitous beauty, if only to give order to their poems. In the meantime, Lawrence saw the novel in terms of organic *flow,* as a delicate balance of wholly fluid relationships, and he evolved his own kinetic brand of art to handle them.[5]

A typical short story, "The Blind Man," may help to clarify the problem. For the central and pervading symbol of the story—Maurice Pervin's blindness—is only a point of focus for a special condition of

being in Pervin himself, and for the special conditions of his marriage; and though these various conditions might be vague and obscure in texture, they are never static, and their nature and direction are known to both Lawrence and the reader. Here, for example, is a revealing description of Pervin's blindness:

> Pervin moved about almost unconsciously in his familiar surroundings, dark though everything was. He seemed to know the presence of objects before he touched them. It was a pleasure to him to rock thus through a world of things, carried on the flood in a sort of blood-prescience. He did not think much or trouble much. So long as he kept this sheer immediacy of blood-contact with the substantial world he was happy, he wanted no intervention of visual consciousness. In this state there was a certain rich positivity, bordering sometimes on rapture. Life seemed to move in him like a tide lapping, lapping and advancing, enveloping all things darkly. It was a pleasure to stretch forth the hand and meet the unseen object, clasp it, and possess it in pure contact. He did not try to remember, to visualize. He did not want to. The new way of consciousness substituted itself in him.

This new way of consciousness is the famous "phallic" or bodily form of consciousness, and Pervin's sense of the life-flow can easily be traced to its awakening. His blindness has resulted, in other words, in a change of being, and this change has led in turn to closer contact with the primitive indefinite. This is the nature of his emotional state, and a moment later Lawrence reveals its direction:

> The rich suffusion of this state generally kept him happy, reaching its culmination in the consuming passion for his wife. But at times the flow would seem to be checked and thrown back. Then it would beat inside him like a tangled sea, and he was tortured in the shattered chaos of his own blood. He grew to dread this arrest, this throw-back, this chaos inside himself, when he seemed merely at the mercy of his own powerful and conflicting elements. How to get some measure of control or surety, this was the question. And when the question rose maddening in him, he would clench his fists as if he would *compel* the whole universe to submit to him. But it was in vain. He could not even compel himself.

Thus Pervin, like the Brangwen men in *The Rainbow,* is caught and held within a state of blood-prescience. And the potential danger of that state is kept in focus by a series of kinetic, if symbolic, scenes. The blind man moves forward toward his wife, Isabel, for instance, out of the fecund darkness of the barn. His wife can actually *feel*

him coming toward her, and the darkness itself seems like "a strange swirl of violent life . . . upon her." She feels giddy, and afraid even of her husband as she meets him in his own rich world of unresolved blood-intimacy—so that the scene can only be described, in ritualistic terms, as a communion of fear.

A similar scene occurs when husband and wife sit down to dinner with their special guest, the intellectual "neuter," Bertie Reid. But here, in the safety of the house, the scar on Pervin's face suggests to Isabel that her husband, "so strong-blooded and healthy," is also cancelled out. The scar strikes Bertie this way too. He looks away from it with difficulty, and, "without knowing what he did," he picks up "a little crystal bowl of violets" and sniffs at them. The flowers, of course, are alive and organic, while Pervin remains fixed within a single form of consciousness. Thus an awkward moment occurs when Reid places them in Maurice's hands, so he may smell them too. Both Isabel and Reid are afraid and deeply disturbed at this point, and again we have, in ritualistic terms, a mounting communion of fear.

This fear is dissolved, however, with the final ritual scene. Later that evening, Bertie looks for Maurice and finds him in the barn, pulping turnips. The two begin to chat about Isabel's happiness, Maurice's scar, and the casual nature of their own acquaintanceship. Then Maurice suddenly asks if he may touch him. Bertie complies, reluctantly, and Maurice gathers his head in his sensitive fingers, shifts and adjusts his grasp until he has covered the whole face, then grasps the shoulder, arm, and hand before him. The bachelor lawyer feels annihilated by all this; he quivers with revulsion as Maurice asks him now to touch his own blind eyes. But again he complies:

> He lifted his hand, and laid the fingers on the scar, on the scarred eyes. Maurice suddenly covered them with his own hand, pressed the fingers of the other man upon his disfigured eye-sockets, trembling in every fibre, and rocking slightly, slowly, from side to side. He remained thus for a minute or more, whilst Bertie stood as if in a swoon, unconscious, imprisoned.
>
> Then suddenly Maurice removed the hand of the other man from his brow, and stood holding it in his own.
>
> "Oh, my God," he said, "we shall know each other now, shan't we? We shall know each other now."

Where Joyce might see an epiphany in such an experience (a static, timeless manifestation of some spiritual essence), Lawrence sees instead a kinetic transformation of being, in both Pervin and Reid. Thus Maurice stands "with his feet apart, like a strange colossus," when

the two return to Isabel; while Bertie is now "like a mollusc whose shell is broken." Through the friendship rite, one man moves toward greater fullness of being; his blindness is transcended, his unresolved blood-intimacy released, and the limited circle of marriage itself is broken by "the new delicate fulfillment of mortal friendship"; but the other man is destroyed by the experience—his outer bulwark against life is smashed, his inner vacuum thoroughly exposed. Thus the ritual pattern of the story is complete.

By setting off Lawrence against the symbolists in this manner, by giving as much credence to his metaphysics as we normally give to theirs, we are able to see what sort of artist Lawrence actually is. And seeing this much, becoming more familiar, as it were, with the ritual pattern of his work, we can at last answer some of the more popular charges against him: namely, that he had no operative sense of form; that his work was merely impressionistic; or that he kept remarkable faith with the living moment, yet never produced a complete work of art. As Frederic Hoffman states it:

> Form for Lawrence was unimportant—though he was capable of writing aptly finished short tales and novelettes, his longer novels are held together by a succession of moments of crucial experience; its continuity is fitful, the *modus vivendi* a series of revitalized crises of bodily relationships.

This criticism is sound, in part, but Hoffman falsely assumes that emotional life is formless in itself. Apparently, Lawrence felt otherwise. His faith in the living moment was uniquely counterbalanced by his faith in the human soul, whose death and resurrection, within the living body, was his chief concern. And so, to accommodate his concept of the soul, as a stable but ever-changing element, a kind of second ego which moves along within the flux of life, waxing and waning in accord with man's emotional experience, he discovered and employed emotional form; he learned to deal, directly or obliquely, with specific states of being; he learned, quite literally, to chronicle the movements of the soul. Thus, in the better part of his writing, the "crucial moments" always mount or flow toward definite ends, and Hoffman, among others, fails to account for this fact. Granted, the emotional form breaks down or backs against itself, like Pervin's sensual flow, whenever Lawrence wrestles with those problems which he cannot solve. But significantly enough, this breakdown coincides with the troubled middle period of his life—the period stretching from *The Lost Girl* through *Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, The*

Boy in the Bush, and *The Plumed Serpent.* But the four major novels —those which express his finest psychological and moral insights— are all well-organized along ritualistic lines. It seems scarcely accidental, then, that a man is born at the end of *Sons and Lovers;* a woman, as *The Rainbow* ends; while in *Women in Love* a man and a woman meet and marry—and conceive a child some eight years later, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover.* For these four novels represent an impressive and decidedly artistic attempt, on Lawrence's part, to set forth the conditions of manhood, womanhood, and marriage, as he felt or understood them in his own life. These novels coincide, that is, with his own "rites of passage."

NOTES

1. In *The Later D. H. Lawrence,* William York Tindall makes extravagant and extensive claims for Lawrence-as-symbolist. In *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence* and more recently in *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence,* Harry T. Moore takes a much more qualified approach; he simply holds that Lawrence used symbolist techniques during a particular phase of his career. Such notions are not, of course, without cause or precedent. In the early 1930's both Anaïs Nin and Francis Fergusson had written on the suggestive and subjective nature of Lawrence's symbols, though without comparing him specifically with the *symbolistes.* This paper owes its genesis, incidentally, to conversations with Mr. Fergusson, who might not agree with all its contents, but who at least made them possible.

2. Presumably, it might also encounter Wordsworth's religious flux, Nietzsche's Dionysian force, or Bergson's *élan vital.* At any rate, we can safely lump these various beliefs together under the general heading of the primitive indefinite, since each of them involves some vague, indefinite force or flow of a religious nature.

3. At the end of the novel, for example, Ursula Brangwen wants "to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of Time."

4. In *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence,* Father William Tiverton speaks of the sense in Lawrence's work "that what is shown as alive owes its aliveness to something behind or above—to the transcendent." But he fails to connect this observation with "dramatic" structure, and he also fails to separate Laurentian transcendence from the usual Christian sense of the term, and thereby robs us of the full import of Lawrence's accomplishment.

5. Mr. Tindall tries to avoid this conclusion in *The Later D. H. Lawrence;* he cites Loerke's notions, in *Women in Love,* on art as non-representational form, to show "that Lawrence had an artist's conception of significant form." And undoubtedly Lawrence did, but he also rejected it: as Ursula Brangwen tells Loerke in the same novel, "The world of art is only the truth about the real world." In other words, Lawrence saw art as a representation of reality, and a kinetic one, and not as "an arrangement of material for an aesthetic [and static] end," as Tindall would have us believe. Unfortunately, Tindall seems to equate Lawrence with other novelists, like Joyce and Mann, who *do* write in the symbolist tradition.

MILLEN BRAND:

The End

1

On a certain day
he goes to bed
weaker,
definitely weaker.
Earl comes through the rain of wallpaper flowers
to stay with him.
"I'll get that larger bed for you," he says,
"from upstairs," and he carries it down,
the bed that has the smell of the past in its dark wood
headboard and footboard.
"Thank you, son. It's better."
He lies in this bed with his skin paled to a tulip white,
and with all the last hollows of the bone,
at the temples, at the cheeks, and at the eyes sunk
in weakness and shadow,
clear
as if a wax burns inside.
Earl thinks,
He wants to die.
He's tired.
Perhaps there is a truce at the end between living and dying,
perhaps life ends in a failing
graduated downward step by step to the approach of sleep.
The thought comes willingly
to the need.
As he lies on the bed,
his change
is like the perfect weakness of a cloth
thrown on the ground.
His arms lie flat.
Under the trace of his moustache
his mouth hardly holds its shape,
its muscles disarranged

where the cloth fell.
"Stay near, son," he says
unclearly.

2

The ambulance doors close on him in a narrow room.
The lights of the night city
strike into his eyes as at a window
covered with a blue curtain.
As the motor catches, awkwardly
he feels for the edge of the mattress shelf
and sits up in his mind.
He is climbing one of those long roads in the Smokies
where the sun falls in streamers
from the moving arms of trees.
He is going to Texas.
"Started Christmas Eve and it took me six days," driving
the white line.
The fragile frame
of a dream ball of tumbleweed blows on the road,
but never comes. It disappears
like a cat.
The rain is loud over Venita.
He starts again by car
for Fort Pierce, but the palms clatter their soft drums
too steadily and the gartered boles threaten.
The sun blinds him now and he wants
only to return, if he can, to his warm wood stove
whose heat smells of pine and whose safety
is
his mother's arms.
"All right, you take the front."
So they lift the stretcher out,
walking into the rear nave.

3

"He will live
three days."
The right side of his face has swollen hideously to his ear.

He taps the counterpane,
annoyed with the edema.
Five weeks later he is still alive,
watching two hornets of dextrose
sting his legs. Alive, awake
and thinking.

4

The swelling has gone down.
Licked it again.
How many times they told me I would die!
I was real sick the first year, being carried on pillows
in that clear Kingston air that came
though the windows, smelling of tomatoes.
Yes, I was a baby on pillows, fed
from another's breast, not Susie's.
Delicate, but lived.
And when I was four, I had that diphtheria.
I don't know how long I was sick then,
but at the doctor's last visit
I was what he claimed was "beyond hope."
Wouldn't live the night through, he said.
Then that old woman neighbor,
Old Lady. Well, I can't remember the name now.
She suggested putting a canopy over the bed
and slacking lime under it.
Him there breathing oxygen
under that tent you see through,
that's what brings it to mind.
I was alive in the morning and the doctor
was stumped. You there,
you're a pretty thing. Ain't she pretty in that white?
In my bones the steps dance.
That white lime boiled, it had a rough sound
against the mixing hoe or
whatever Susie stirred it with. Slaked
like thirst. I say, little one,
you that's pretty there. Pretty. And she knows it, don't she,
cutting away with her white behind?
Josie, my oldest sister, carried me

when I got stronger,
carried me on her back down the stairs.
She slipped on the last step and fell against the clothes press.
No damage done. We laughed afterwards.

5

"When can I go back to Mabel's?"
It is that last clear day
rising like a water flower slowly
to open up on its stem in gray water.
Nine men in black coats
come to the center of the ward,
a pyramid like bowling pins
pointing to the long row of beds,
and sing.
The several notes of their chords
part and converge uneasily
like the runners of a dream.
I sang once
like them
in a choir.

6

He drinks a boat of milk.
It is milk he likes most.
If they would only
give it again, give that nipple hard
in its porcelain whiteness, hard and straight
and full.
"Milk."
He wants to lift his hand to it,
to guide the flow down. That white cloud.
How the slacked lime
boiled!

7

"My side hurts."
He moves,
shifting his side with the tired frown blending

"uh"
the daylight and the night.
Earl touches his old face,
giving it the old-time nudge.
"Still kicking?"
    And he smiles.
Smiles with his thickened lips.
Smiles with his eyes.
Smiles.
Smiles the years of the bareback horse
at Jim's, skimming to the stable
"gee, if you'd seen him go over that bar!"
Smiles the years of Eatontown,
the damn grubs in the amber jelly
at the tree roots, but that one big strike: potatoes.
Smiles the years of the looping line
whipping out over the wet sea,
forever crashing inward from its bed.
Alive. Alive
and kicking.

8

He is alive, his eyes' hope steady
when the machine of his blood begins to sound.
It "fills."
The least ruffle like the spill of a stream
begins in his breast.
It gets louder and climbs.
As it climbs, hour by hour, his eyes change.
They say, I can't drown like this
inside, can I?
and yet
this bubble of inside water
rising in his throat.
    The doctor
on the last space on his chart, observing him unseen,
writes "Fatal."
    A tap in a nearby basin
drips like a clock tick until Earl

comes to his side.
"Hello."
"Hello," he shapes with the great gag of his tongue
curling, and his eyes turn like a dog's.
Is it?
Earl props the pillows higher,
lifting him above the water,
holding him like a father a son
out of the stream of fear.
He breathes.
He does not speak, he reaches out
his hands.
His hands go to the rail of the bed and grasp it,
they relinquish the rail and in the air
grasp and close,
seeming to close on something formed
by the need of the hands themselves.
They touch the cover of the bed, fingering it,
they touch Earl's hands, his sleeve,
they seem to touch the world farewell.
"Dad."
Now the hands listen, now the grasping hands
stop.
The basin tap, unchecked, has dripped to dark.
The nurse says:
"I'm sorry, but it's time to go."
"Let me stay. Please," Earl says.
"I'm sorry."
"A few minutes more?"
"You may come back in the morning."
He wants to stay in spite of death itself, but
he wants as much to go,
to leave the platform of this rustling stage
to its own dark.
He bends downward.
Dad listens with his less than ears,
and with a last curl of his gagged tongue says:
"Good-by."

9

One eye is closed,
the other half open.
Half open, it sees.
It sees Earl's shape move up
out of the morning light,
and life
behind the eye
moves the lips once.
    Having waited, having greeted,
in that final love
he dies.

DELL HYMES:

Only a Little Down (or, The Rite Price)

He touched a finger to a pursing lip:
Winds went into hiding, as the buds
Stopped opening. There was no birdsound at all.

Seated as we were, on the mezzanine,
We could delight in every item of
The green tableau: the frame of fern for the

Unparting beak, the sculpt eggs white below
The poising wing, oh the birds that stayed so one
Could count them, and the turned leaf, inset stem—

Then breeze came tearing like a traffic cop,
Rounding the corner of the far aisle, then
Everywhere petals were spreading, shells broke.

"That," he bowed, "is what it will be like;
"As lifelike as ourselves, and elegant,
"The perfect gift. And not one fallen leaf—

"For a few thousand down—a *personal* Spring."

I Do What I Can

His children were kind,
If toleration is kindness, and why
That small gaunt man
Ran off to sea,
The children, muttering,
Couldn't understand: he was no use,
And they'd been tolerant.

What use, what use had the sea
For an old inedible man?
No use,
Observe, at the scrim of receding tide,
Wave-battered bones.

Let us gather them together
(Newspapers will do)
Carry these briny bones out
Of a world
Of marauding children and piddling dogs.

Collectors of a great city's waste,
Admit them to your fire.
There's a better sermon,
Gautama knew,
In its ministry.

THOMAS H. CARTER:

Wyndham Lewis: The Metaphysics of Reality

HUGH KENNER: *Wyndham Lewis.* New Directions: Makers of Modern Literature.

WYNDHAM LEWIS: *Self Condemned.* Methuen.

The essential Wyndham Lewis, novelist and artist, has too long been obscured by the elegant swirl of his own polemic dust. Typical "criticism" of his work, not much calculated to enlighten the curious (Eliot, for instance, called him "fascinating"; Saul Bellow, "a prize goop"), has been more substantive than literary. Mr. Kenner's scrupulous study, ranging over a career that began as early as 1908, affords us the framework we need to understand Lewis, not as slashing propagandist, but as our most energetic creative intelligence—whose unique concern it has been to define, in words and paint, the nature of the Real.

Wyndham Lewis, an incredibly compressed little book, may be read as the story of a man whose native genius, like that of the Hemingway whom Lewis admires, spent half a lifetime to reach the point where most, lesser men begin. In Lewis's case, a compulsively Berkeleian attitude towards the reality of *other* people has formed the essential basis for his aesthetic, and later polemic, practice; it underlies his accomplishments as well as his paradoxically significant failures. At the same time, it should never be forgotten that Lewis was first of all a visual artist (a remarkably skilled one) and that, until his sight failed in 1951, he remained as much a painter as a writer. Obviously here is a key to what Mr. Kenner terms Lewis's "war with time," for painting is a spatial rather than a temporal art.

The present, Lewis early recognized, is not accessible to our apprehension: we are jammed too close to it; thus "There is no Present—there is Past and Future, and there is Art." Time, because it destroys, is the creator's enemy, and he must realize *objects* that are no longer susceptible to the flux, even though he brings them close to death's coldness in the process. Like Wordsworth, the Lewisian artist elects to live on a hill and concentrate on things that endure. It is extremely significant, however, as Kenner observes, that "If you drag the Lewisian artist down into visibility, you find that, being human, he doesn't quite believe in his lonely rôle. . . ."

If, like Descartes, you are prepared to bet solely on your own reality, it follows naturally enough that the characters in your fiction will be puppets dangled from off-stage, and that the protagonist alone will be competent to function as the creator's Ape; but where, in strict Cartesian logic, is the antagonist to spring from? Jove's forehead, of course; Mr. Kenner defines Lewis's twin principles of action as "the Self and Not-self, whose quarrel in Lewis's mind guarantees the energy of his books and pictures." The question is one of tension. We have then, as the artist's deputy, the hero—or Ape—of the creative will;

and the sensual crowd-man, who may be one or many: the social self which the lonely "artist–allotrope" has called up. But the Self, because it has allowed its loneliness to "create" a corrupt alter ego that isn't itself, must inevitably be contemptuous of the Not-self as an inferior being, just as the crowd-man despises the Self for not merging into its crowd-existence. Although Lewis has since stopped trying to impose its outline on the external world, this fundamental conflict continues to generate his characteristic plot, which Mr. Kenner discovers in embryo in the early *Little Review* sketches:

> The generic theme of his novels is a battle of personalities which finally erupts from under and *truncates* a mechanical series of actions. . . . Each has up to the moment of that consummation been engaged in the plot of a conventional novel of action (the circus) and simultaneously in a series of tensions whose logic, suddenly intersecting that of convention, precipitates him into the "universe of absence." For the logic of conventional plot unfolds in time, and we get a significant action when, through the agency of personality, Time is denied.

Since the heroes of Lewis's first fictions were really lay-figures animated by their creator's superlative energy, it is no surprise to find them engaged in wholesale attempts to disown or ignore a most persistent past in order to enhance their potency in the present. Mere life, which subjects one to time's mechanical reduction, was unworthy of the Lewisian hero; was suitable merely to receive the waste products of his sterner efforts, which were reserved for Art.

Lewis's quarrel with time—finally resolved in *The Revenge for Love*—didn't limit itself to his characterization. Ordinary sequential prose offered no fit medium for the hero who disdained to submit himself to chronology, and Lewis's effort to provide one more suitable resulted in the creation of what is probably (Joyce aside) the most striking prose style of our century. It exists, as Kenner points out, by reducing the *time*-word, the verb, to impotence:

> The stars shone madly in the archaic blank wilderness of the universe, machines of prey.
>
> Mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere, white rivers of power. They stood in eternal black sunlight. . . .

If the past, sometimes in the person of old friends, kept turning up to embarrass the Lewis protagonist, Lewis's own determination to have no truck with sequence got him into predictable difficulty when, just prior to the first world war, he abandoned his original pictorial prose to attempt conventional narrative in the composition of *Tarr*. The first portion of this novel, concerned with Frederick Tarr himself, is written in the expected static idiom, an accumulation of striking images which don't do much more than offer themselves for the reader's inspection. Tarr is typically the Lewisian artist who abstracts himself for art; but by the book's end, he has allowed himself to be drawn into the lives of others. The Flaubertian objectivity of the conclusion, Kenner notes acutely, is actually a dodge on the author's part to cover up the fact that a Lewisian paradigm has somehow been corrupted.

The ambiguity in Tarr's treatment—a conflict between a tightly reasoned

metaphysical position and the demands of ordinary narrative (remember also that the Lewisian artist doesn't quite believe in his lonely rôle)—becomes evident with the introduction of Otto Kreisler, who, intended as a kind of opposite number for the hero, blandly proceeds to usurp the reader's—and the author's—attention. A talentless art student who channels *his* energy into the realm of sensation (specifically sex), Kreisler "isn't so much a 'character' as a sort of eyeless, misshapen fish, at home in the prose and moving murkily through it." With the appearance of Kreisler, Lewis's style largely surrendered in its attempt to stand still and devoted itself to the German's compulsive, hallucinated drive towards self-destruction. The result, though curiously mixed, is an impressive tragi-comedy without parallel in English.

The significance of this novel goes beyond its achievement, however; the figures of Tarr and Kreisler suggested the alternatives that were open to Lewis as a dramatic artist. He has stated that the natural condition of The Enemy (Lewis's characteristic polemic *persona)* is to be in opposition; hence he chose Tarr. After this decision the previously formulated Vorticism ("a still point," as Kenner defines it, "controls the circling flotsam of demotic living, which in fact circles most wildly in closest proximity to the funnel of calm") became Lewis's chief axis of reference. It is difficult to give an account of Lewis's literary activity from about 1920 to 1937 without being misleading—the years seem paradoxically a waste and a real achievement; but Mr. Kenner neither begs the question of the polemics nor gets bogged down in it.

As early as 1927, in *The Art of Being Ruled,* Lewis announced his defense of the austere, creative intellect against the perpetual effort of the crowd mentality to reduce *all* men to the level of nursery-school mediocrity; this effort he saw manifested in countless ways, from the strait-jacket of family life to Spengler's time-jaunts to Bergson's immersion in flux; and he immediately discerned a fresh "conspiracy." As Kenner shrewdly indicates, Lewis neglected to name the conspirators. His interest in power, like that of Pound or Faulkner, belongs (in Leslie Fiedler's term) to the category of G.I. politics; but, since a movement doesn't require a head to be tangible, this fact in no sense invalidates the tough center of Lewis's criticism.

From the beginning Lewis was highly indignant at those who would reduce human beings to the level of behavioristic machines; but this is pretty much what he did himself when he formulated the comic principles of *The Wild Body* (1927). Since to the observer the element of soul, or inner life, present in certain Breton peasants wasn't visible, Lewis decided—in order to secure the comic effect of men behaving like machines—to treat them as though it didn't exist. Which was well enough in itself (the present writer thinks more highly of these sketches than Mr. Kenner seems to); but soon "The only person the behaviorist had insulted, it appears, was Wyndham Lewis." The result was a series of casually brilliant comic novels which, however one may delight in their unexampled vigor, represent essentially, in Lewis's own words, an "aggrandizement of the trivial." Horace Zagreus, hero of *The Apes of God* (1930), is spokesman for one Pierpoint, an omniscient intellect who wisely conceals his lack of reality (he too is an Ape—for Lewis) by keeping off-stage. The situation is much clearer in the case of the behaviorist-protagonist of *Snooty Baronet* (1932), who is forced to question his own reality when he perceives

the similarity between his "behavior" and that of a hatter's mechanical dummy.

It took Lewis five years and a botched novel to mobilize his forces around this new insight. Then, in *The Revenge for Love* (1937), appeared some real human beings, capable at last of subordinating the pyrotechnical Lewisian prose to their own frail autonomy. Here the Lewis Ape, a grimly comic Red named Hardcaster, finds his chief spiritual defense, his professionalism, shattered because other personalities have broken through:

> But meanwhile a strained and hollow voice, part of a sham-culture outfit, but tender and halting, as if dismayed at the sound of its own bitter words, was talking in his ears, in a reproachful singsong. It was denouncing him out of the past, where alone now it was able to articulate; it was singling him out as a man who led people into mortal danger, people who were dear beyond expression to the possessor of the passionate, the artificial, the unreal, yet penetrating, voice, and crying to him now to give back, she implored him, the young man, Absalom, whose life he had had in his keeping, and who had somehow, unaccountably, been lost, out of the world and out of Time! He saw a precipice. And the eyes in the mask of THE INJURED PARTY dilated in a spasm of astonished self-pity. And down the front of the mask rolled a sudden tear, which fell upon the floor of the dirty prison.

This was followed by *The Vulgar Streak* (1941), in which the Lewisian hero, inhabiting for the second or third time a world of similarly real people, characteristically disowns the Past, only to discover by so doing he has betrayed himself, and those he loves, into disaster—a far cry from the non-causal Vorticist universe of Frederick Tarr. The protagonists, the Apes, of Lewis's recent fictions, it appears almost superfluous to add, have been involved with characters whose reality is as unquestionable as their own. Reality, no longer a question of kind, has become one of degree. In fact, Lewis's postwar criticism has been concerned, not with the metaphysics of reality, but simply with what is *true*. The Wild Body, itself as much a machine as ever, has got back its soul.

I have intended to do little more than suggest the hard core of Mr. Kenner's informative book. Like the author's earlier salvage job on Pound, *Wyndham Lewis* performs well a task that needed badly to be done, clearing away the fogs of prejudice and falsity from a major artist (who was of course there all the time) and elevating the achieved work into a fresh and decent perspective. It need hardly be said that many critics spend their energy checking familiar structures for termites; but it has been Mr. Kenner's felicitous job, by recalling us to some of our most significant writing, to erect foundations for new edifices.

Self Condemned, Lewis's first novel in fourteen years, has nearly the appearance of a carefully timed dramatization of Mr. Kenner's study. René Harding, like an academic version of The Enemy, decides that the history he teaches, its emphasis on crowned thugs and sanctioned homicide, is not worthy the attention of civilized men; he discards, by resigning his professorship, not merely his personal Past but that of humanity—a protest no one, not even his wife, can be made to understand. In desperation he moves to Canada, where he and his wife are exiled in penury by the advent of world war. Incompatible

on any level above sheer sex, the two exiles are drawn together by their bitter circumstances—until their third-class hotel burns down. As their fortunes begin to improve, Harding resolves never again to be reduced to poverty, while his wife fixes irrationally on the idea of escape home to England. This latter alternative, in effect a return to indigence, would frustrate Harding's growing success; callously he refuses any real communication with his wife, who finally throws herself under the wheels of a truck. Harding first blocks from his consciousness all thought of his wife, then rationalizes his memory of her into the false image of a stupidly selfish woman. When the book ends, Harding, now an "academic shell," has joined the faculty of a large U.S. university.

The whole of *Self Condemned,* grinding forward less on a plot's slick joints than with the inevitability of a glacier, is articulated with all the solidity of felt experience; but Lewis's objectivity, with The Enemy (perhaps) held in merciless focus, never wavers. The rightness or wrongness of Harding's initial idealism is of no dramatic importance; what counts is that, after his early Canadian deprivation, he doesn't *care.* A sensitive and intelligent individual, stubbornly insisting on a private reality, has let himself be converted into something of a monster. It is tempting (though irrelevant) to probe *Self Condemned* for the bare bones of autobiography; but the parallel is false. Lewis was never—and this fine novel is certainly not the only proof—Harding's kind of failure.

BABETTE DEUTSCH:

"Everything Has Its Own Speed"

E. E. CUMMINGS: *Poems, 1923-1954.* Harcourt, Brace.

JAMES STEPHENS: *Collected Poems.* New, Revised and Enlarged Edition. Macmillan.

"Oh for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!" cried a poet in his youth. The gift was granted, but to another poet, and a century later. If Cummings at sixty has not grown to the stature of Keats when he died at twenty-six, neither has he lost his verve. The young delight in his frank sexuality, his gay brutality, his undiminished romanticism. So, with reservations, do his aging contemporaries, who still smile wryly over some of his satires and admire those lyrics electric with immediacy.

The thing presented may be a moment of tenderness, lust, or scorn; it may be the glimpse of a skyscraper, a street corner, a little animal, a face; it may be lovely or ugly; what the successful poem translates into Cummings' idiom is the assault of experience, like a kiss or a slap. This is the child's "puddle-wonderful" world, where intensity suddenly and briefly magnifies the trivial into a major event. There are paths here that lead into Blake's country, into the region where a Zen Buddhist might feel at home. Cummings does not explore them. His gifts are of another order, and he exerts them in other ways.

He did not need to announce to his readers that he is "abnormally fond of that precision which creates movement." Practically every page of this stout volume testifies to the fact. When he writes about apples, they are not resting in a fruit dish, but being pulled from the bough and falling to the ground. When he describes a sunset, a goat must be wandering about in it. His portraits in verse, whether of public performers, of such pleasant private characters as ruddy Mr. Lyman fresh from a funeral, or of various drunks and whores, show people in motion. Perhaps because, loving movement, he is so skilful in recording it, he pushes aside the metaphysical concerns that give scope and depth to the work of a religious poet like Eliot, Auden, or Thomas, and to that of a secular philosopher like Wallace Stevens, as irrelevant to his pleasures. Prominent among these is the explosion of schoolboy obscenities. They are tiresome, and when he parades his ivyleague prejudices one wonders why the vicious forces of reaction should find a friend in this anarchist from New England. But Cummings does not always indulge his adolescent humor when dealing either with the socio-political climate or with the "little ladies more than dead" (a phrase he likes well enough to use on two occasions). There is vigor in his caricatures of patrioteers in and out of uniform, health in his angry laughter at those who worship the idols of the tribe and the marketplace and who would destroy heretics like pacifists and poets. Cummings can evoke the sordidness of Nighttown and its environs with a brutal honesty which is the more remarkable in a poet capable of a delicacy equally precise. Few lyricists have celebrated the wonder of early love and the joys of gratified desire with his candor and accuracy. Few are so successful at galvanizing the reader into awareness.

Cummings' absorption in movement is that of a child, but his passion for the precision which creates it is that of the craftsman. Thus his exact timing literally resurrects Buffalo Bill

> who used to
> ride a watersmooth-silver
> stallion
> and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
> Jesus

—we echo, "he was a handsome man." The same precision splits and whips and spins the syllables that miraculously cohere as the "spun=flash" of Paul Draper. In some pieces the stuttering gait of the lines is that of a clowning acrobat whose awkwardness is actually the result of the nicest control. Cummings' broken syllables, his idiosyncratic punctuation, the cubistic tricks that make a printer's nightmare and a laggard reader's despair, can be effective devices. When they are well managed, they create a dynamic whole to be grasped in an instant and studied with satisfaction. But not seldom the demands made upon the reader are out of proportion to the pleasure they may bring him. It is as if the poet invited him to a game of jack-straws, promising to wind up by building an exciting *Gestalt,* but the *Gestalt* speedily collapsed into a heap of jack-straws and the game proved a bore.

There is an enormous gulf between Cummings at the peak of his performance and Cummings when he lapses into adolescent sentimentality or vulgarity, or

is content merely to echo himself. Now and then there are other echoes. Is it Cummings or Sandburg who asks: "—what does it all come down to? love?" and who speaks of "so-longs and ashes"? Is it Cummings or Mr. Vinal who, writing a poem on his lady, draws invidious comparisons with such others as Helen and Cleopatra? There is compensation for the triteness of these allusions in the original turns of phrase that enliven this early lyric. But there is no excuse for repeatedly rhyming "spring" with "sing" or for throwing other rusty razorblades into recent poems. Instance: "—it's april(yes,april,my darling) it's spring!"

Cummings has enlarged and strengthened his vocabulary by turning nouns into verbs, and by reifying conjunctions and pronouns, definite and indefinite articles. It remains limited and remarkably abstract. His tendency toward allegory, however cleverly concealed, stands in the way of the enrichment of concrete particulars that is so precious to poetry. The snow flutters and falls, the moon rises, lovers kiss and couple, mice run across the floor, cats fall on their feet. The event is presented, it is not illuminated. The snowfall, the moonrise, the act of love, like the mouse and the cat, are actual, without, however, being unique. That is one of the reasons why the later poems give the reader a sense of *déjà vue*. It is the more disappointing because, as has been noted, Cummings knows how to draw sharply individualized portraits. Moreover, he can make his abstractions jump about like so many Pinocchios, thumbing their long noses at the truant officer in the liveliest fashion, or, in other lyrics, he will pipe a tune to which the blankest words in the dictionary must dance. His masterly way with rhythm is of course one of the most engaging features of his performance.

So uneven a collection leaves one suspended between impatience with Cummings' lack of discrimination, and pleasure in his achievement. The reader may be outraged or bored. But he is also delighted by the eccentric accuracy with which, at his best, the poet handles language, the impudence that vitalizes his rhythms, the gay energy of his satires on a death-devoted society. And one keeps returning to certain poems: those that peer into the gutters and windows of the Village or the Left Bank, noting the dead fish, the live girls, the broken glass reflecting a piece of sky; those that beat with the pulse of a man in love, whirl in a snow-flurry, climb at the tail of a windy kite. Here is a book that displays, with rare candor, the excitements and the tedium, how much is lacking and how much is satisfying, in "a life of sensations."

In the Introduction to a group of poems that were "New" in 1938, Cummings said that they were written for people like himself by a man who "can never be born enough." In the Preface to his *Collected Poems,* assembled much earlier and now reissued in a revised and enlarged edition, James Stephens remarked: "The duty of the lyrical poet is not to express or explain, it is to intensify life, and its essence is properly indefinable." Stephens is the more explicit of the two, but both poets are obviously saying the same thing, as the performance of both testifies.

In some respects, Stephens is the more faithful follower of tradition. Though he too knew how to break a normal line so as to catch the very twitch and pause and bound of a grazing goat, he had not the inventiveness that went to the setting down of the ideographs for which Cummings is famous. And richly colloquial as are Stephens' adaptations from the Gaelic poets (to whom,

in this edition, credit is not given), he does not reproduce the timbre of the vernacular as does Cummings, recording the speech of Gert the trull and old Nic, the ice, coal, and wood man. But to examine the body of Cummings' work is to recognize that, however diverting his bag of tricks, much of the time he is talking in a conventional way on the traditional subjects of poetry. Stephens, who also writes about the sweets of spring, the joys and sorrows of love, has a lilt, a tempo, a sparkle that quickens such familiar themes and lifts them into the light. He manages his rhythms with the intelligence of a dancer, and whether his vocables sing or whisper or shout, there is always music going on. He uses the device of repetition with uncommon skill. And withal he is a master of brevity, as becomes a man of wit. He once observed that, when he began to write poetry, he found that everything was "moving, . . . going somewhere. So," said he, "I found everything has its own speed. And I tried to put that speed into my verses." This is not so far from Cummings, either, with his passion for movement.

Much as these two have in common, however, there is a vast difference between them. It is not a matter of background, though Stephens never forgot the Dublin slum in which he was born nor Cummings the polite Cambridge of his boyhood and youth. It lies partly in the fact that Cummings has remained, in more ways than one, a sensational poet, while Stephens, content with a somewhat old-fashioned instrument, had the interests of a philosopher and at moments the insight of a mystic. Indeed, there are passages in some of the later poems where he seems to stand for an instant at "the still point of the turning world." That is a significant difference. But there is yet another. Stephens, meditating the universe, can give such full assent to its grandeur that he accepts it in all its cross-grained ugliness and splendor, with the horror and delight that it affords, as an indivisible awful whole. There are times when he seems too ready to sound a note of cheer. Yet repeatedly, emphatically, with grim detail, his poems also acknowledge the ugliness and the horror. Cummings is incapable of assent not because he has another approach to the mystery, but because he keeps his distance from it, being no philosopher. And though he has produced a number of pieces presenting the more repulsive aspects of living and dying in this twentieth century, the fewest of these notations show the humanity of certain of Stephens' lyrics. Cummings entertains us with his goblin mice and toads. Stephens makes us hear the crying of the rabbit caught in a snare. Cummings, outraged by the standardized world he never made, bursts into harsh satiric laughter. Stephens, seeing all awry, could speak out his anger, his grief, without mincing words, often with as much wit as bitterness, and more compellingly because of his restraint. Perhaps because he wrote about the Irish villager rather than about the Greenwich Villager, one is more apt to find an earthiness and an inwardness in his sketches than in Cummings'. Stephens draws his meanest characters with a certain sympathy. He wrote some facile lyrics and some that are unwarrantably full of sweetness and light, but he was never guilty of Cummings' spiritual snobbery. And if he won to serenity in the end, it was not easily achieved.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the two poets is that while both of them recognized that "everything has its own speed" and tried to put that speed into their verses, Stephens wrote understandingly about diminished velocities. If Cummings speaks of age, it is almost always with contempt, as

though it were an ignoble disease from which he was himself immune. It may be true that those whom the gods love die young. It is also true that those whom the Muses love do not look away from death's encroachments. Yeats spat into the face of time that had disfigured him, but the deed was an acknowledgment that Cummings refuses to make. And if James Stephens' attitude was one of quiet acceptance, he came to it not by ignoring the work of time but by contemplating eternity. Further, his attitude was an ambivalent one. There are poems of desperation here as well as poems of ecstasy. To read his book is to have a deeper sense of the complexity and cruelty, as well as the gaiety, of life. The stronger lyrics of both men intensify experience. Cummings sometimes does it in a more exciting fashion. James Stephens often does it more resonantly.

DUDLEY FITTS:
No Valediction

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH: *Songs for Eve.* Houghton Mifflin Co.

The lady in Aristophanes who complained that time isn't kind to any of us had her mind on something more visceral than poetry, but her observation applies to lyrists as well as to lovers. The perplexities that beset any good poet after fifty, like those of the middle-aged amorist, are always painful and frequently comic. So we get Pa in the Jaguar, while Junior sits at home playing at Yeats; or else we get Pa in the Teiresias manner, hardening his rhythms to suit his arteries, rasping out gnomicisms from the chimney corner. Poetry is a young Mans Mother; a Growne Mans Mistresse; but of Dauid the King let the Shulamite speak. Whatever she says will be ambiguous.

These intimations of change and decay are provoked by a book which reflects neither, but which seems to be constantly afraid that it is about to do so. Even the title, *Songs for Eve,* has overtones which must be deliberate; and there are a few poems in which MacLeish is obviously trying on a couple of cerements for the fit. Thus the concluding verses of "With Age Wisdom":

> Now at sixty what I see,
> Although the world is worse by far,
> Stops my heart in ecstasy.
> God, the wonders that there are!

A proper thought; yet what can it be but lack of conviction that clogs it so with blankness that it doesn't transpire? Enforced; if the poet really meant the last two lines, he could not have written them: see the end of his own "Ars Poetica," composed years ago. And yet, as I have said, it is a proper thought; and it is, of course, the impulse that drives the best of these new poems. Let us look briefly.

I am not particularly concerned with message. Certainly the paradoxes of the Eden poems which give this book its title are tame enough, or expectable enough, for usual trading. Moreover, they are largely automatic: the paradox

may stiffen a poem here and there, but there is a considerable element of sleight that doesn't quite come off. It is the sort of parlor magic that one senses in the theological masques of Robert Frost: too coarse-spun to be anything but coarse-spun. It is rather in the appended lyrics that we find what we are looking for. (Not in all of them: for, as Mr. Randall Jarrell has recently informed us, not even the Complete Works of a fine poet are wholly exempt from repetitiousness and inconsequence.) The wonders that there are: the immensity of the small; the passion that can re-create this for us:

> Fish has laid her succulent eggs
> Safe in Saragossa weed
> So wound and bound that crabbed legs
> Nor clattering claws can find and feed.
>
> Thus fish commits unto the sea
> Her infinite future and the Trade
> Blows westward toward eternity
> The universe her love has made.
>
> But when, upon this leeward beach,
> The measureless sea journey ends
> And ball breaks open, from the breach
> A deft, gold, glossy crab extends
>
> In ring-side ritual of self-applause
> The small ironic silence of his claws.

What I admire here, in addition to the sonal control (about which, in MacLeish's case, it is an impertinence to speak), is the connotative raying, the brilliance *in loco* even of so unpromising a trade-word as "succulent" (which is made to vibrate for the first time in its life); the multiple ways in which the saying works towards its culmination in the last two lines. I have no doubts at all about this poem. (If I could possibly have come near writing anything as good, I should probably have preferred "its," at the end, to "his"—on the "Ars Poetica" principle which I have mentioned.) It is not a riddle, or a theological paradox, or a proper statement; it is a poem that stops the heart.

And so with others: a handful in a small book, but enough to show that *Songs for Eve* is not an *ad interim* work, or a tentative premature valediction, but the MacLeish stuff itself. Grant a certain amount of vociferation, a rhetorical stridency:

> voices
> Blathering slanders in the house of
> State, and the obscene birds, the black,
> Indecent, dribbling, obscene birds—

which might be called fighting excrement with excrement, a messy duty for the poet who knows those black birds and knows what their obscenity means; granted, too, a technic occasionally tired, too often tinged with reminiscences of Yeats and Frost: what remains is poetry untouched by time, in spite of MacLeish's own half-confessed intimations of mortality. There is no reason yet for calling Abishag to bed.

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Of ACCENT, published quarterly at Urbana, Illinois, for October 15, 1954.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, and George Scouffas, all of Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois.

2. The owners are: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, and George Scouffas, all of Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

Kerker Quinn (Editor)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of December, 1954.

Katherine H. Peer, Notary Public

(My commission expires November, 1956)

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SPRING 1948: Francis Fergusson (on 'Oedipus Rex'), Klaus Mann, William Goyen, W. S. Graham, Margaret Webster (on Shaw), Radcliffe Squires, J. W. Beach, Neil Weiss, etc.
SUMMER 1948: William Sansom, Robert M. Adams (on Pound), Vernon Watkins, Willard Maas, John Waller (on Keith Douglas), Daniel Curley, M. J. Mason, Vernon Young, etc.
AUTUMN 1948: Hugo von Hofmannsthal (a novella), John Arthos (on Faulkner), Carl Bode, Agnes W. Macdonald, Gudger Bart Leiper, Radcliffe Squires, Roger Shattuck, etc.
WINTER 1949: Stanley Edgar Hyman (on John Peale Bishop), Rachel Frank (on Unamuno), William Humphrey, Lorca, Edwin Morgan, Vernon Young, R. V. Cassill, Ellen Tifft, etc.
SPRING 1949: Caroline Gordon (on Stephen Crane), Joan Griffiths (on Waugh), Peggy Bennett, Rilke, R. W. Stallman (on 'The Secret Sharer'), William Sansom, Donald Jenks, etc.
SUMMER 1949: Irvin Stock (on Gide's 'Theseus'), James T. Farrell, Robert Creeley, William Humphrey, Neil Weiss, Sherna Vinograd (on Eliot), J. R. Shuman, Robert Thackaberry, etc.
AUTUMN 1949: Eudora Welty ('Put Me in the Sky!'), R. L. Cook (on Frost), Zygmunt Haupt, Howard Griffin (on Auden), Arthur Gregor, Ralph Robin, James Blish, etc.
WINTER 1950: F. L. Overcarsh (on 'To the Lighthouse'), Wallace Fowlie (on Eluard), Delmore Schwartz, Louis Pauwels, Peggy Bennett, Mortimer Slaiman, Harry Sylvester, etc.
AUTUMN 1950: E. E. Cummings, Bonaventura Tecchi, Odysseus Elytis, Dezso Kosztolanyi, Jo Sinclair, Horace Gregory, Sandra Wool and Leo Hamalian (essays on Eliot), etc.
WINTER 1951: Bertolt Brecht ('A Little Organum for the Theater'), J. M. Bradbury (on Ransom). Joseph Bennett, Srinivas Rayaprol, Oliver Snyder (on Melville), Morton Seif, etc.
SPRING 1951: W. Y. Tindall ('Dante and Mrs. Bloom'), Parker Tyler, Peggy Bennett, Lysander Kemp, Stephen Stepanchev, Brewster Ghiselin, Jack Strickland, Cecily McNeil, etc.
SUMMER 1951: R. P. Blackmur (on 3 novels of Henry James), Arthur Gregor (a play), George Anthony, Alwyn Berland (on Tate), Frank O'Hara, Daniel Curley, James Schuyler, etc.
AUTUMN 1951: Wallace Stevens, Rudolph von Abele (on Hawthorne), P. H. Lowrey, H. P. Porter, Donald F. Theall (on Eliot's 'Coriolan'), Harold Norse, Byron Vazakas, etc.
WINTER 1952: R. V. Cassill ('The Life of the Sleeping Beauty'), Marjorie Brace, Vernon Watkins, C. G. Anderson (on Joyce's 'Portrait'), Howard Griffin (on Auden), etc.
SPRING 1952: Vernon Young (on Conrad's 'Nigger'), C. R. Wagner and Richard Eberhart (essays on Stevens), Roberts Jackson, Jo Sinclair, H. R. Hays, Sol Chaneles, etc.
SUMMER 1952: Wallace Fowlie (on Rimbaud), Karl E. Zink (on 'Billy Budd'), Hermann Hesse, T. Weiss, Jascha Kessler, Joseph E. Dewey, Parker Tyler, Roy Marz, etc.
AUTUMN 1952: Kenneth Burke ('Imitation'), Italo Svevo, Daniel Curley, Wallace Fowlie, Irvin Stock (on Gide and Hale White), Bobb Davis, Bernice Slote, Jim Walters, etc.
WINTER 1953: W. V. O'Connor and W. R. Moses (essays on 'The Bear'), Millen Brand, Jules Laforgue, Rex Worthington, Ruth Stone, Cid Corman (on Thomas), Howard Griffin, etc.
SPRING 1953: Valery Larbaud, Jules Romains, Sherman Paul (on 'Walden'), J. M. Bradbury (on Warren's novels), Albert Cook (on 'Measure for Measure'), John Logan, etc.
SUMMER 1953: Wallace Stevens, Randall Jarrell, Louis Zukofsky, Warren Carrier (on Stevens), James Hafley (on 'Between the Acts'), Frank Holwerda, Gordon N. Ray, etc.
AUTUMN 1953: J. F. Powers ('The Presence of Grace'), Randall Jarrell, Chayym Zeldis, Kenneth Burke ('George Herbert'), Robert O. Bowen, R. G. Stern (on Pound), etc.
WINTER 1954: Wallace Fowlie ('Claudel and Sacred Art'), Marianne Moore, Frederick Bock, Constance Pendergast, Melvin Backman (on Faulkner), Herbert Gold, Robert Horan, etc.
SPRING 1954: Bertolt Brecht ('Puntila'), Irvin Stock (on 'The Holy Sinner'), Ralph Robin, Isabel Bayley, D. W. Evans (on Eliot), Parker Tyler, William Jay Smith, etc.
SUMMER 1954: Odysseus Elytis (a distinguished long poem), Irene Hay de Uribe, Mary Dewees Fowler, Edwin Fussell ('Hemingway and Mark Twain'), Kimon Friar, Edwin Honig, etc.
AUTUMN 1954: H. C. Morris (Crane's 'Voyages'), Hollis Summers, Wallace Stevens, Raymond Radiguet, Norman Friedman, Donald Justice, William Eastlake, Leonard Wolf, etc.